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History  
of  
Modern Marathi Literature  
1800—1938

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**GOVIND CHIMNAJI BHATE**  
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MAHĀSIVRĀTRĀ ]  
ŚAKA 1860

[ FEBRUARY 17, 1939

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“ The great Homer wrote not in Latin, for he was a Greek; and Virgil wrote not in Greek, because he was a Latin. In brief, all the ancient poets wrote in the tongue which they sucked in with their mother's milk, nor did they go forth to seek for strange ones to express the greatness of their conceptions: and this being so, it should be a reason for the fashion to extend to all nations. ”

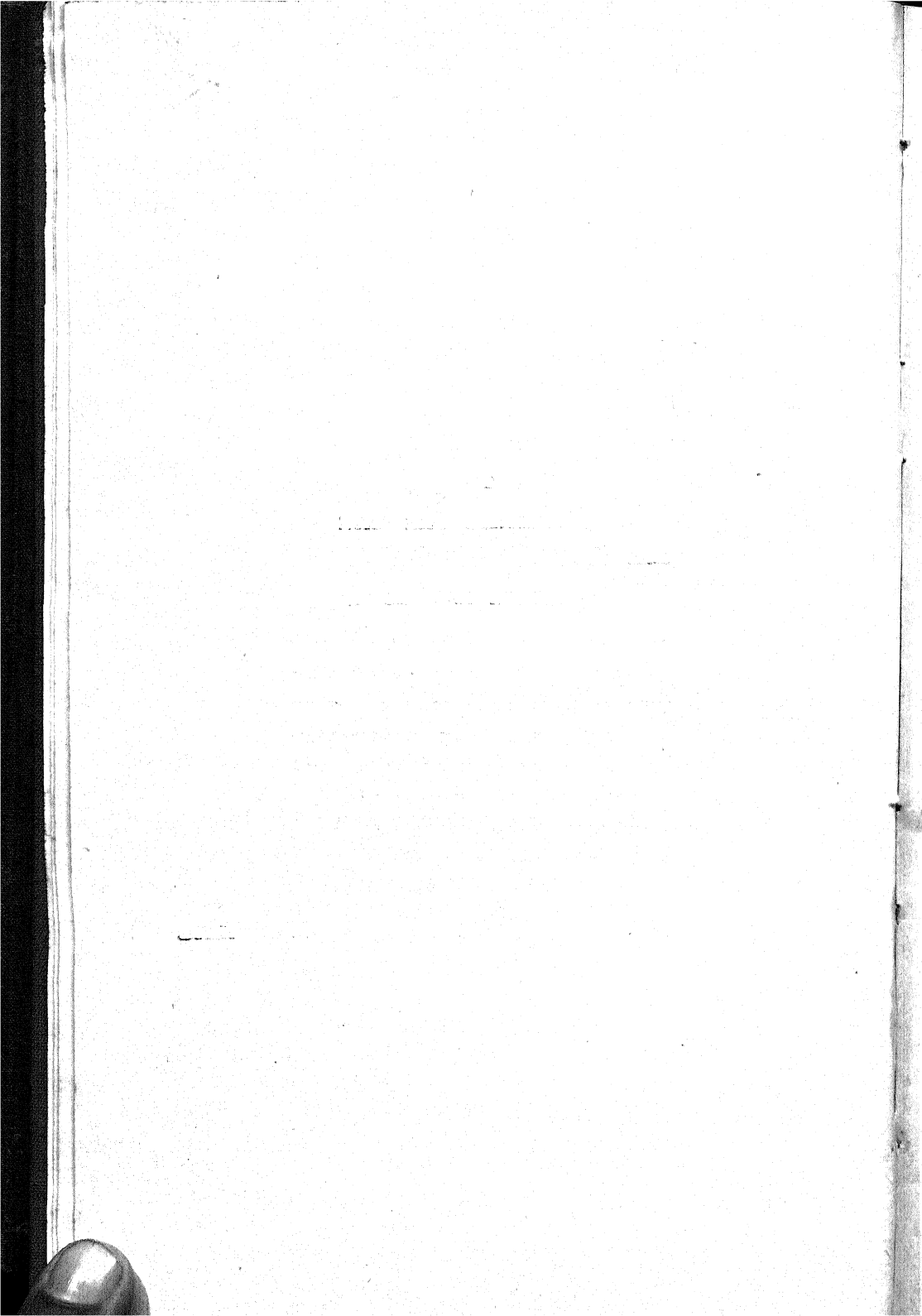
—DON QUIXOTE



DEDICATED  
TO  
HIS HIGHNESS THE LATE  
SIR SAYAJIRAO GAIKWAR  
MAHARAJA OF BARODA,

In recognition of and as a fitting literary  
memorial to His Highness, who was the  
most enlightened ruler in India and  
the greatest patron of Marathi  
literature, and whose beneficent  
rule over his kingdom lasted  
for over sixty years, thereby  
rivalling the reign of  
Queen Victoria.

G. C. BHATE



## PREFACE

Philosophy, both European and Indian, was the subject of my teaching during a professorial career of about 35 years, 25 years as a professor of Philosophy in the Fergusson College, Poona, and 10 years as the principal and professor in the Willingdon College, Sangli. My voluntary subject in the University career was Philosophy. So it was my first literary love. But from young age I was a zealous and careful student of both old and modern Marathi literature. I was in the habit of writing books on a variety of topics like Economics and Philosophy. And, having been a great traveller, I wrote ten volumes describing my travels in India and abroad. Thus Marathi literature was my second literary love.

The introduction of Marathi language and literature into the B. A. and M. A. curricula of the Bombay University dates from 1920. Now it is made a voluntary second language in the first two years of the College course also and is one of the optional subjects at the B. A. and M. A. examinations. So a large number of junior students and those who take Marathi as their voluntary subject have to study regularly Marathi language and literature old and modern. But there are few facilities for such a study. For, well-edited and well-annotated critical editions of books and authors do not exist. There are no histories of Marathi literature giving a brief account of authors and their books or with critical and appreciative remarks. Although Marathi is their mother tongue Mahārāṣṭriyan students do not find the study soft and easy and they have frequently to take help from their regular professors or from amateur scholars of Marathi literature. So many students come to me for solution of their difficulties and for consultation about how to study Marathi literature and where to find the material for its study. I felt that there was an

urgent need of a comprehensive and exhaustive history of Marathi literature. To write such a history extending over a period of about 800 to 1000 years was almost an impossible task for one man to accomplish within a short time. So I took up the shorter period of modern Marathi literature from 1800 to 1938. I found the difficulty of getting books, especially those published during the first half of this period.

I had heard from England-returned Indian students that the British Museum Library and the India Office Library contained a very good collection of Marathi books published from 1800 onwards. So I made up my mind to go to England to read the books available there. As I had not enjoyed privilege leave during the course of my service before, I was free to take one year's privilege leave from the college. From the financial point this was an advantage. Further, I was fortunate enough to secure active pecuniary help from Śrīmant Bābāsāheb Ghorpaḍe, Chief of Ichalkaranji, who gladly supplied the 'sinews of war' for my journey to and stay in England for about 6 months or so. I went to England in August 1929 and returned home in May 1930. Of this period I spent eight months in London alone, utilising the whole time in studying Marathi books, making notes and taking extracts from books which were rare and not available in India. There, in the two Libraries, I found a large number of books published till 1912. But a catalogue of books published after that period was not printed. Moreover, the Librarian of the India Office Library told me that for want of space they could keep only select set of books published after 1912. I found that the selection was very haphazard and extremely defective. So I thought I might easily get the books, published after 1912, in Indian libraries and that the work could be finished within a few months. When I went to England I had not definitely made up my mind as regards the language in which I should write the proposed history. But when I was introduced to the Librarian of the India Office

and I told him about my object he gladly agreed to help me by giving me all facilities for reading in the Library. But he said, "Here we have a treasure of Marathi literature but not being acquainted with that language we neither know the value nor the importance of it for want of a key to it in the form of a history of Marathi literature written in English." So he earnestly requested me to write my history in English. On a consideration of the matter I recognised the reasonableness of the request. Further, I came to see that almost all Indian Universities recognised Marathi as an alternative second language and so, many non-Marathi students take up Marathi out of curiosity or acquired interest. For such students a history of Marathi literature written in English was easier to read than to peruse one written in Marathi which they had just begun to study. So I made up my mind to write my history in English.

Immediately after returning home I wanted to continue my labours on the history by reading the literature of the last 25 years. But I had to go back to my work in the Willingdon and Fergusson Colleges which took up three years. Then I took up the work of publication of the accounts of my travels in ten volumes which required over a year's time. Thus years passed before I could resume my work at the history. Of course off and on I was trying to collect further material. At last about eighteen months back I seriously and continuously applied my mind to the difficult task of completing the work. I did the actual writing in about six months and the printing of the book took about four months.

In India I was able to collect material from the Marathi Libraries at Thana and Bombay, the Central Library at Baroda and the Library at Kolhapur. The Fergusson College Library with the Mandlik Section and the Willingdon College Library with the Chief of Miraj Section were always available to me and I made use of them. To

the Librarians of these Libraries I feel thankful for the readiness with which they helped me.

For getting information about living writers scattered throughout the vast Marathi-speaking country, I tried to approach them by publishing a letter through the Newspapers in which I requested them to send me a brief account of their life and of their literary work. I published a large list of writers about whom I needed information as I had none. I am glad to write that I received a good response. I feel thankful to all those who responded to my request and also to the editors of the various newspapers for giving publicity to my letters. Such in brief, is the tale of writing of this history.

A careful perusal of my history will show that modern Marathi literature shows a healthy and vigorous growth and progress especially within the last 25 years. Of course one cannot help noticing a few defects and deficiencies. First is the habit of writers to have very long titles to their books which are more like descriptions of the subject matter. The name should be short and striking. Secondly, writers very rarely refer to the Indian civilization which went from here to Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, Siam, Tibet, Japan and China. Thirdly, they do not make use of the discoveries of modern science. Fourthly, they do not study nor make use of the life of the lower strata of Hindu society. Lastly, they very rarely touch other religions, especially that of Islam which has come to stay permanently in India. These defects of our modern literature are here referred to so that future writers and present ones too might try to avoid them in their books. With the removal of these defects and with the careful study of more advanced European literatures, Marathi literature may, in the near future, attain a high level of excellence and would then stand comparison with the highly developed literatures of the West.

This HISTORY OF MODERN MARATHI LITERATURE is the first of its kind in English. I am aware that there must be



many mistakes of omission and commission in the collection of material and in its presentation in a shipshape form. On reading the book for making an index I have found that, besides the usual 'printer's devils' which are very few, inaccuracies of statement which are fewer still. I shall be glad if I am informed about these and other mistakes by those who will look into my volume.

In reading accounts of the authors and their books in my volume, readers will notice now and then a direction to look to the extract with a number quoted. But they will miss the extracts in the body or in the appendices of the volume. I have already said that when I planned to write this HISTORY OF 'MODERN MARATHI LITERATURE' I had not made up my mind as to the language in which to write it. If the history had been written in Marathi, extracts in Marathi would have been given under each author and the readers could have read with interest my account of the author as also the extract from his book. In fact, I wanted to follow the system usually adopted in the histories of English literature. But when I made up my mind to write my History in English, I felt the incongruity of printing Marathi extracts in Devnāgarī character while the rest of the 'History' was all in English and in Roman character. So I dropped the plan of publishing extracts either in the body or in the appendices. I have, therefore, decided to publish, in the near future, an independent book, with all the extracts in Devanāgarī character in chronological order. This would be, like this History, an exhaustive and comprehensive anthology of Modern Marathi Literature (not a small school book) showing the growth and progress of Marathi Literature as regards style of writing, manner of presentation of the subject matter, novelty of ideas, feelings of the writers and lastly 'criticism of life,' which, according to Matthew Arnold, constitutes the essence of high class literature or poetry. The extract number quoted in this 'History' refers,

therefore, to this proposed 'Anthology.' They are intended for the use of Marathi-knowing readers of this 'History' who will be inclined to read that book also, as being the first of its kind. I have taken care that the non-Marathi readers can read this volume without feeling any kind of break or hindrance in the account about the authors.

I cannot conclude this preface without referring to the constant help of my son Professor Manoharpant Bhāṭe especially in improving the style of the work here and there. He also helped me off and on in correcting proofs. I must also sincerely thank Mr. Phaḍṇīs of the Āryabhūṣaṇ Press who read the form proofs and who not only detected lurking 'printer's devils' but also some times made happy suggestions about improving the wording in the book. Lastly, I must thank the Āryabhūṣaṇ Press for having done the work so well and so soon.

Mahad, ( Dist. Kolaba )  
 Mahāśivarātra  
 Śake 1860.  
 (17th February 1939) }

G. C. BHĀṬE

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### System of Transliteration

अ a, आ ā, इ i, ई ī, उ u, ऊ ū,  
ऋ r, ॠ ṛ, ऌ ḷ, ए e, ऐ ai, ओ o, औ au,

क k, ख kh, ग g, घ gh, ङ ṅ,  
च c, छ ch, ज j, झ z, ञ ṇ,  
ट t, ठ th, ड d, ढ dh, ण ṇ,  
त t, थ th, द d, ध dh, न n,  
प p, फ ph, ब b, भ bh, म m,  
य y, र r, ल l, व v, श ś,  
ष ṣ, स s, ह h, ळ ḷ,

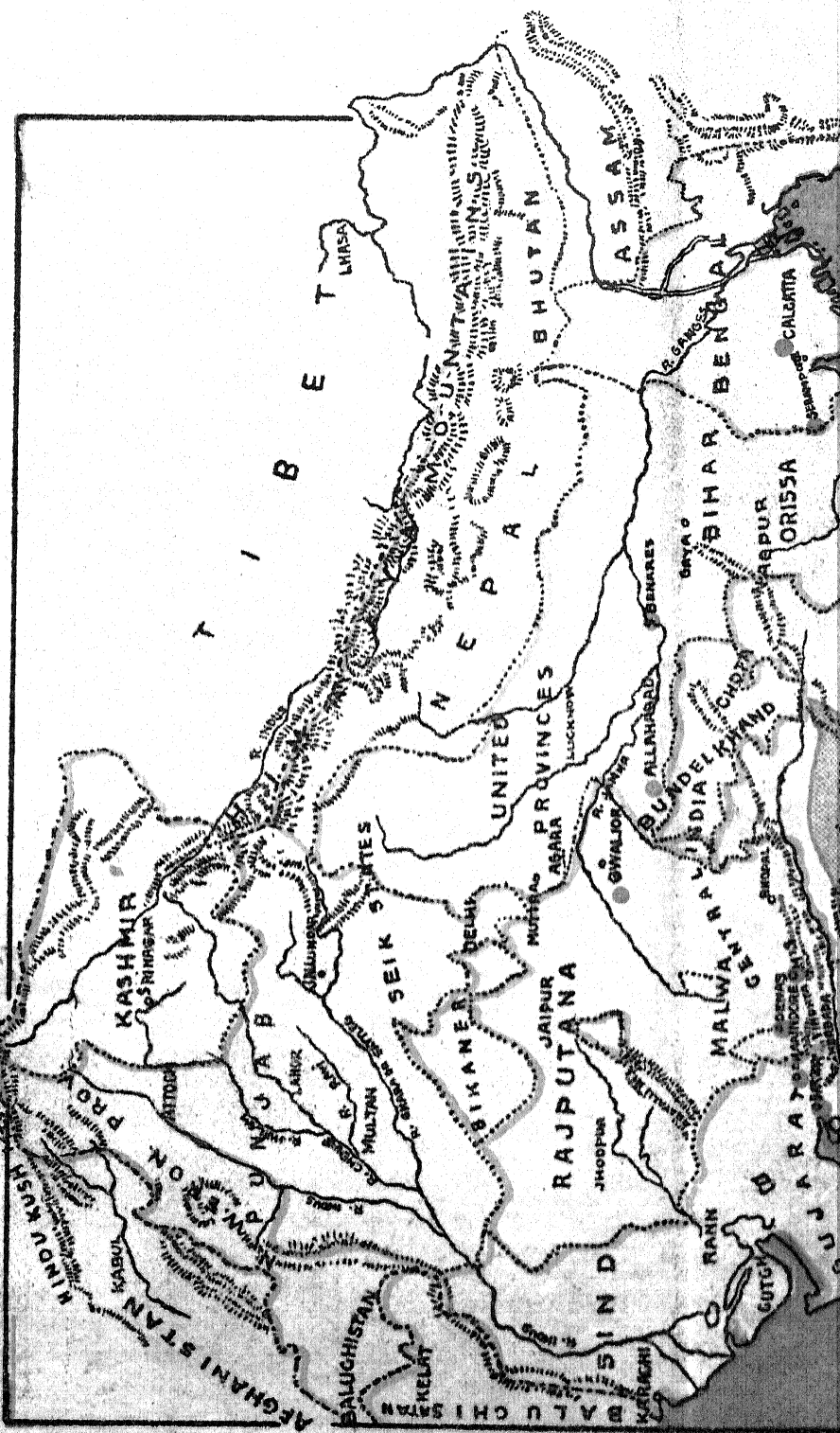
क्ष ks, ण Ḍny.

anusvāra m

visarga ḥ

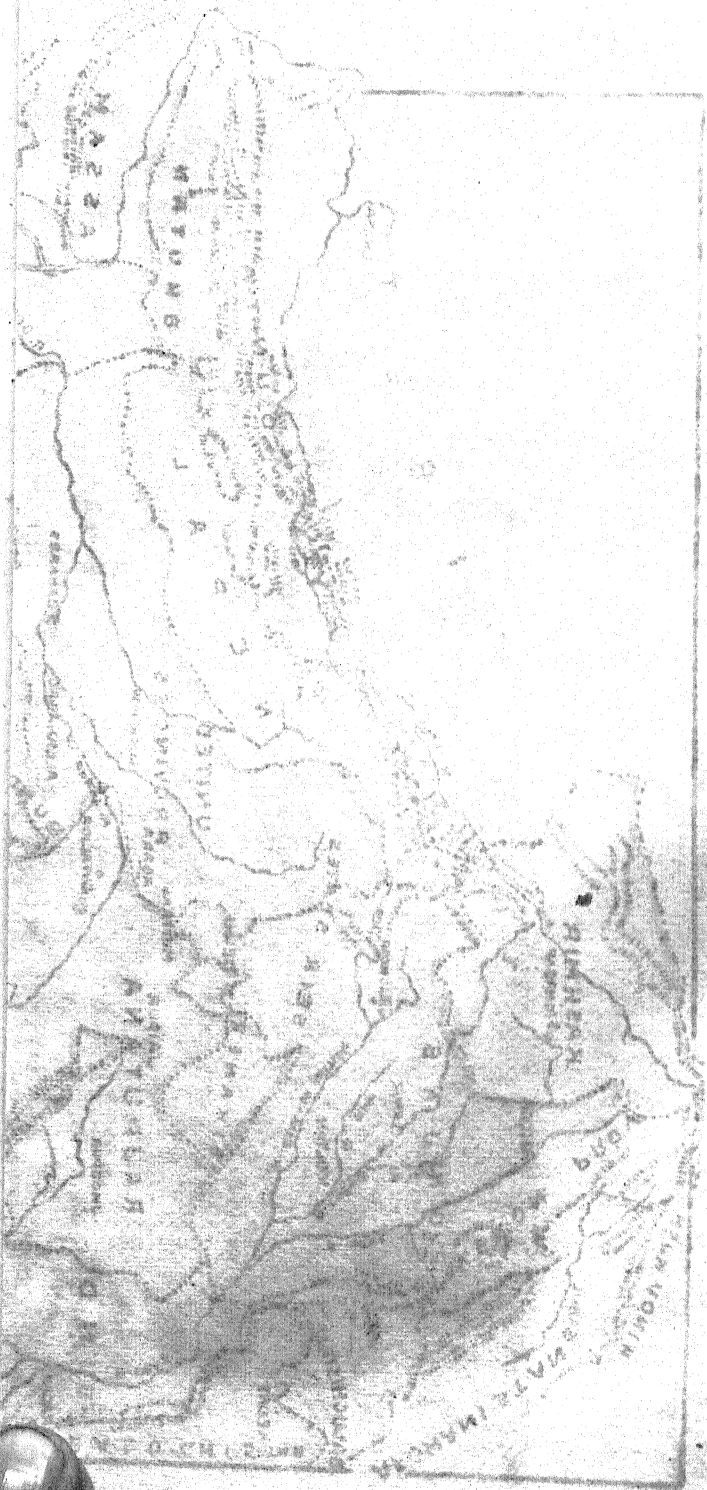
## MAP OF INDIA

Showing the total population of Marathi speaking persons in Maharashtra proper & throughout the rest of the country.



# AIQV' IO SIAM

Presented to the Asiatic Society of America, by the Asiatic Society of America, 1890.



# The History of Modern Marathi Literature

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Art and Nature, Literature and Science, Poetry and Prose : these three sets of correlated terms are often referred to by literary critics and by historians of literature. As this volume treats of the history of a period of Marathi Literature, it is necessary to determine, at the outset, the exact meaning in which these terms are used. Let us then begin from the first set of terms.

### ART AND NATURE

Nature means the sum total of things physical and mental. This term is the widest in extent or denotation but it is the narrowest in meaning or connotation. Nature is often personified and then it is referred to as a goddess, while natural things are spoken of as her handiwork. In contrast to this meaning of nature, one speaks of art. Art is defined as skill in the application of human knowledge to the *production* of things. As this skill is of various kinds there arise many arts. Arts which are used to produce things capable of ministering to the physical wants of man such as the eating, drinking, clothing and the housing of men, are called the useful arts. And the arts which give *disinterested* delight to man and which deal with the higher desires and higher ideals of man are called the fine arts. The higher desires and higher ideals being few and fixed, the fine arts are few and fixed in number, while the physical wants

of man being variable and almost infinite, the useful arts are many and various and with the growing and expanding knowledge of man, they grow and increase in number. Besides, there is nothing higher and lower in the useful arts, all standing on the same level. But with regard to the fine arts, the case is different. In the first place, fine arts are few and their number is, forever, fixed and they are classified as higher and lower. These fine arts are, like the musical notes, seven in number: architecture, sculpture, painting, dancing, dramaturgy, music and poetry and the highest position in the hierarchy of fine arts is given to poetry. This term and the term literature in its narrow sense are regarded as synonyms.

#### LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

Let us now take up the second couplet of terms, science and literature. Unlike those of the first couplet these two terms are strangely related. In its wider meaning the term literature is a genus of the term science. For in its generic sense literature means the written record of human experiences and ideas; while science is a written record of the body of knowledge built up on a basis of observation and experiment, and compacted by reflexion on the data thus supplied.

But the term literature is more often used in a narrow sense. In this sense it is regarded as a synonym of poetry, a term in the last couplet. In this sense the two terms coalesce into each other and they will constantly figure in this volume. So we shall have to discuss, at great length, the exact meaning and import of the two synonymous terms. But before we proceed to do so, let us dispose of the last couplet of terms prose and poetry.

#### PROSE AND POETRY

Prose and poetry are terms which refer more to the manner in which human experience and ideas are expressed



rather than to their matter. Obviously prose is written composition expressing in plain simple language human experience, while poetry is unlike it in its composition. Let us now address ourselves to the main and final question of this introductory chapter.

### ESSENTIAL NATURE OF POETRY

That question is, what is the essential nature of poetry or literature or light literature? To an unsophisticated man of the street, the answer is simple and plain. He will define poetry as versified and rhythmical composition. He is familiar with such composition from his early boyhood. For, in every country the earliest form of composition is poetry. It can be easily committed to memory ; it can be sung and it can be communicated by word of mouth. This is the reason why poetry rather than prose prevails in the early stages of a society. But this simple definition of poetry is doubly faulty. It is both too wide and too narrow. It is too wide as it will include versified composition like metrical dictionaries, medical or historical works. It is too narrow as many a prose composition is essentially poetical. A better variation of the above definition is that poetry is a form of composition written in a style in which clear, sweet and vigorous terms abound. Clarity, sweetness and vigorousness are regarded as inherent qualities of words or terms in a language and styles of composition are classified in accordance with them.

Another and a still better variation of the definition under consideration is the following. Poetry is a form of composition in which figures of speech abound. Figures of speech are regarded as ornaments of composition that add beauty and grace to the style. But figures of speech are divided into those dependent upon the sound of words or terms and those dependent upon the import and meaning of these terms. Thus this variation of the definition adds the entirely new element of meaning to that of merely verbal style. The

different variations of the definition of poetry so far considered take into account the terms and the style in which ideas and experiences of a person are expressed. These are called the *body* of poetry and without such a body poetry cannot be recognised. Still the essence of poetry consists in its having a *soul* in addition to the *body*. Thus *body* and *soul* both together constitute the real essence of poetry. So the definitions discussed so far are not entirely wrong. They have got an element of truth in them. But in order to understand the real nature of poetry we must try to go deeper and find out the soul of poetry.

#### IMITATION OF NATURE

In this investigation two apparently contradictory definitions present themselves. The first is the famous one formulated by Aristotle, the greatest of the Greek philosophers. He included poetry in the fine arts and put it at the top of the list of them. According to him poetry is an *imitation* of nature expressed through the medium of language. In this definition emphasis is laid on the vividness and exactness of imitation. The greater the exactness of resemblance between the original and its image in words, the finer is poetry and its composition. This view is well illustrated by the story of the two painters who vied with each other in trying to produce characteristic pictures of their art. One painted a picture of a vine-yard full of garland-like bunches of ripe grapes. His picture was so vivid that parrots began to peck at the fruit! The painter triumphantly showed this to his rival. The latter then took the former to his studio and asked him to look at his picture lying behind the curtain. Then the former began to put aside the curtain but he discovered, to his surprise and astonishment, that the curtain was not a real one but a picture painted on the wall of the studio! The latter explained, "Your picture deceived only irrational birds like parrots but mine has deceived the painter himself. Who, then, is the greater painter?"

## SVABHĀVOKTI AND VAKROKTI

This story very well illustrates the truth and the error of Aristotle's view of poetry. Let us now consider the definition apparently opposed to that of Aristotle considered above. According to this, poetry is oblique composition. Oblique means literally curved, not straight and hence indirect. The distinction between the two apparently opposed definitions given above is very well expressed by two Sanskrit words i. e. *Svabhāvokti* and *Vakrokti*. *Svabhāvokti* literally means a true and exact representation of facts; while *vakrokti* means curved indirect representation of the same facts. The former forms science or scientific literature, while the latter forms poetry or light literature. The former is the joint work of the observing and reasoning powers of the human mind; while the latter is the work of the fancy and imagination of the human mind.

The truth of these two opposed definitions is brought out beautifully in the following story.

An ugly man who was naturally shunned by his townspeople wanted to make his house their centre of attraction. To attain this object he went to a local painter famous for producing very attractive pictures. He asked him to paint such a picture of his own person as to attract the townspeople to his home. The painter declared the thing to be impossible. For, said he, "If I draw your exact picture it would be shunned by the townspeople as you are shunned by them. But if I draw a picture which would attract crowds to your house it would not be *your* picture. So I am unable to comply with your request."

After these relatively obvious and common-place definitions of poetry, let us now consider the more scientific and generally accepted definition of poetry. About this there is an agreement between Indian and European literary critics and so it may be regarded as the final definition of

poetry, though, there cannot be a finality about an evergrowing and everchanging subject like literature. The definition to be considered is as follows:—

#### SENTIMENT: THE SOUL OF POETRY

Poetry is an outburst of powerful feelings and sentiments expressed through stirring language. This is, briefly, the substance of the description and definition of poetry given by the English poet Wordsworth. A similar definition given by the Sanskrit poet Jagannāth is expressed in a pithy sentence which has become a saying: "Sentiment is the soul of poetry". Sanskrit poets and writers on poetics recognise nine sentiments in all. And their view is that the poet describes his subject in such a way that powerful sentiments of love, pity, fear, laughter, wonder and others are excited in the minds of the readers. It will be seen that the English and Sanskrit versions of the definition express different aspects of the same experience. Wordsworth says that in order to be able to produce poetic literature the poet must be excited by observation of human or natural phenomena. While Jagannāth points out how poetry written by a true poet excites passions and sentiments in the minds of readers. But this double effect can only be produced provided the poet and his readers have minds tuned to the same key. This is technically expressed by saying that a poet must be a man of genius; while a reader must be a man of taste; i. e. genius and taste differ only in degree. Unless this is so what the poet may write will not affect the reader as it is expected to do on account of difference in their temperament. According to my view this definition reaches the very heart of true poetry.

One little addition is made to the above definition and it is acceptable to both Indian and European literary critics. That little addition is expressed in the word 'suggestiveness'. Sanskrit writers call it *Dhvani* or *implied suggestiveness*.

The point is, poetry does not directly and in so many words express passions and sentiments but it expresses the experiences and thoughts of the poet in such a way that passions and sentiments are suggested to the minds of the readers.

#### ORIGIN OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA

That poetry excites feelings and passions both in the poet and his readers is beautifully brought out by the story of the origin of the famous epic poem in Sanskrit the Rāmāyaṇa of the poet *Vālmiki*. The story is worth repeating here as a fitting conclusion to the long drawn-out discussion of poetry in this introductory chapter.

The sage Vālmiki lived on the bank of a river. His daily practice was to go to the river to bathe and return after offering his morning prayers to the God Sun. One day he went at the usual time to the river bank. To his utter astonishment and sorrow he saw the female bird of a *Krauñca* couple falling at his feet pierced and killed by the arrow of a cruel and heartless hunter. The sight so excited and enraged the sage that in his righteous indignation he cursed the hunter in the following famous verse :—

“O, hunter, for eternal years you will not  
 “get an exalted position as you have killed  
 “the female of the amorously affected couple  
 “of Krauñca birds”.

The sage himself was astonished to see that he pronounced a curse upon the hunter in a spirited verse which he never before knew how to compose. The Goddess Sarasvatī presented herself in person to the sage and relieved him of his astonishment. She said to the sage, “You are now inspired by genius and so you should henceforward devote your newly acquired genius and imagination to the production of a great epic poem. The genius which you have received as a gift from the God of Learning will supply you

with all past, present and future events in the life of Rāma the hero of your epic poem."

Such, in brief, is said to be the origin of the great Sanskrit epic Rāmāyaṇa. This story is a beautiful illustration of the definition of poetry which is the result of powerful feelings and passions roused by any strange and uncommon human experience.

With this introductory discussion on literature let us now proceed to the proper subject of this literary history—the origin and growth of Marathi language and literature.

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## CHAPTER II

### SURVEY OF OLD MARATHI LITERATURE

The age of modern Marathi Literature begins from the end of the 18th century. For about this time two causes — the introduction of the art of printing in India and the contact with the western civilization and literature brought about by the all-absorbing rule of the East India Company — came into being which entirely changed the character of and gave a new impetus to Marathi literature. To describe, in detail, this modern age of Marathi literature is the main purpose of this historical work. But as a background to this subject it would not be inappropriate to give a brief account of the older Marathi literature. For, Marathi literature has a long pedigree, going as far back as the 10th century and the Marathi language traces its origin still further back. Let us, therefore, take a rapid survey of this long period of the origin and growth of Marathi language and literature. The Marathi language belongs to what the philologists call the Indo-Germanic family of the inflexional class of the languages of the world. The parent language of this family is conceived to be the spoken dialect (in their northern home, somewhere between Asia and Europe) of the Āryan race — the common ancestors of all Āryan people now scattered throughout the habitable part of this globe. The immediate offshoots of this conceived parent dialect in Asia are seen to be the two sister languages, the *Avesta* of the Zoroastrians or fireworshippers of old Persia and Assyria and the *Ārṣ* or Vedic dialect of the Indian Āryans who came to the Punjab watered by the Indus and its five tributaries. This *Vedic* dialect or *Ārṣ* language gradually grew into what came to be called the Classical Sanskrit language after Pāṇinī's time. The great grammarian Pāṇinī, who flourished about 700 B. C., determined and formulated the principles

of this language. Since then the Sanskrit language became the perfect type of an inflexional language. It was this classical Sanskrit which first became known to Europe by the efforts of Sir William Jones, one of the servants of the East India Company, in the middle of the 18th century.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THE MARATHI LANGUAGE

Pāṇini's Sanskrit language came to be the religious language of the learned people of India. Naturally the spoken language of the Āryan people who spread from the Punjab to the whole continent of India began to differ from this learned language. So, when Gautama Buddha, the founder of the great Buddhistic religion, had to enlighten the people about his new religious ideas he had to take recourse to the spoken language of the people. When, therefore, the teachings and sayings of Buddha came to be written down in the form of books, they were naturally expressed in the actual spoken dialect of the people so as to become easily intelligible to the general public. The language in which the religious books of Buddhism were written came to be called *Pāli*. This language itself became a purely literary language and by the time of Aśoka, the great patron and prophet of Buddhism who was instrumental in spreading Buddhism not only all over India, but even beyond India in all directions, the one spoken language of the people got split up into provincial languages which came to be called *Prākṛt* and were regarded as separate languages. This fact is proved by the edicts of Aśoka promulgated throughout the length and breadth of India. The language and script of these edicts show great variations and modifications according to the provinces in which the edicts were promulgated. These provincial variations grew in extent as time passed and about the beginning of the Christian era the provincial dialects practically became independent languages and came to have distinct names — the Paisācī, the Śaurasenī, Māgadhī, Ardha-māgadhī and Mahārāṣṭrī. Just as



Pāli, the first form of spoken Prākṛt, became the language of the religious literature of Buddhism, so Ardhamāgadhī became the language of the religious literature of Jainism. During all this long period from Pāṇinī to the beginning of the Christian era, classical Sanskrit remained the language of the *learned*. So even the Buddhists and Jains had to learn Sanskrit and had to write books in that language in defence of their respective religious views. Also when they wrote on non-religious subjects they used Sanskrit as the common language of the learned. In Sanskrit dramas the practice of the poets was to use Sanskrit as the language of the higher characters; while they employed the several Prākṛts and especially the Mahārāṣṭrī as the language of the inferior characters. So also popular songs introduced into dramas were written in Mahārāṣṭrī. At the time this would be a fair representation of the actual state of things in India, Sanskrit being spoken by educated people and higher classes and the several Prākṛts being spoken by women and lower classes. Naturally Mahārāṣṭrī too became a literary language like Ardha-Māgadhī and so from about the sixth century onwards literary works came to be written in both Ardha-Māgadhī and Mahārāṣṭrī. Recent researches have brought to light many Mahārāṣṭrī literary works. As no spoken and written language remains the same for years together, this Mahārāṣṭrī itself underwent a gradual change and process of simplification to such an extent that the term *Apabhraṃśa* came to be applied to this modified Mahārāṣṭrī. Recent researches have discovered many a literary work in this Apabhraṃśa Mahārāṣṭrī. The literary works both in Mahārāṣṭrī and its Apabhraṃśa cover the period of about two centuries, from the 6th to the 8th century. The natural and inevitable process of change and modification in a living language, especially when it is used for literary purposes, must have taken place in the case of Mahārāṣṭra-Apabhraṃśa. This led to the rise of the present 'Marathi' language.

## ORIGIN OF MARATHI LITERATURE

This will show that the Marathi language is not directly descended from Sanskrit but it is connected with Sanskrit through Pāli, Mahārāṣṭrī and Mahārāṣṭra Apabhraṃśa. Such is the long pedigree of the Marathi language. Let us now proceed to consider the origin of Marathi literature. It is a well-known fact that the spoken stage of a language may continue for an indefinite period in a community. Such must have been the case of Marathi in the Marathi speaking community. But two important events or causes gave an impetus to the origin and growth of literature in the Mahārāṣṭra country. The first great event was the rise of the Jādhava or Yādava family of Marāṭhā Kṣatriya caste to the position of power in Mahārāṣṭra. A Prince of this family first established his dynasty at Sinnar in Nasik district and later on he transferred his capital to Devagiri when he became a suzerain ruler in Mahārāṣṭra. The family became royal and renowned. It formed a stable and strong government for over 200 years. The Yādava dynasty adopted Marathi as the court language. It also encouraged learning and learned men. The famous minister of this family encouraged Marathi language throughout his long period of administration which extended to the rule of two kings of Jādhava or Yādava dynasty. He is credited with the invention of the running hand for rapid writing called the *Modi* script in which all documents, state papers and private correspondence came to be written. Thus, the adoption by a powerful dynasty of the Marathi language as the court language gave a great impetus to Marathi literature during the 200 years in which the dynasty was the ruling power in Mahārāṣṭra.

## RELIGIOUS SECTS AND MARATHI

The second great event of this period was the rise of two religious sects known as Mahānubhāva Panth and Vārkarī Panth.

These sects were not schisms in Hindu religion like Jainism and Buddhism which developed into separate and independent religions ; but they were rather reforming sects within the pale of Hinduism and had many characteristics in common. Both of them arose in the heart and home of Mahārāṣṭra and at about the same time ; both emphasized the value of devotion to and chanting the name of God as the best and easiest means of salvation and attainment of religious merit, the Mahānubhāva sect selecting Kṛṣṇa and Dattātraya and the Vārkarī sect selecting Hari and Viṭṭhal as their special objects of devotion out of the Hindu pantheon. Both accepted the same religious books and regarded the Bhagavadgītā as the gospel of their sects. Both of them made converts to their sects from all people irrespective of caste and creed. Both formed a kind of brotherhood, having a special badge of their creed in their dress and outward demeanour. Both of them inculcated simple living, prohibiting the use of meat and alcohol. Lastly, both these sects adopted the Marathi language as a vehicle for preaching their ideas to the people and thus gave a great and lasting stimulus to the growth of Marathi literature.

Though these two sects had many things in common and might possibly have made common cause in reforming the Hindu religion, their fate and fortune had totally different turns. While the Vārkarī sect rose in popular estimation and spread throughout the whole of Mahārāṣṭra and especially among the lower strata of society, the Mahānubhāva sect went out of favour in Mahārāṣṭra and it had to find converts in far off places and provinces. The sect was denounced by the Vārkarī Panth as hypocritical and the term Mahānubhāva got corrupted into Mānbhāva and this word actually came to mean Hypocrisy. The Marathi saying ' You speak like a Mahānubhāva but act like a scoundrel ' indicates the inveterate prejudice and hatred against the followers of this sect engendered in the

minds of the common people. Similar has been the fate of the Marathi literature developed by the two sects.

The writers of the Vārkarī sect came to be regarded as the pioneers and founders of Marathi literature. In fact, the founders of the sect gave a tone and character to all subsequent Marathi literature which flowed on in a continuous stream down to the end of the 18th century. This stream of literature was, as it were, the overground current known and appreciated by the educated men till our own day ; while the stream of literature produced by the founders and followers of Mahānubhāva sect went underground and flowed on hidden from the general public.

#### MAHĀNUBHĀVA LITERATURE

This underground current of Marathi literature was discovered by Marathi scholars like Messrs. Rājawāde, Bhāve and Cāndorkar only a generation back. These scholars made friends with Mahānubhāva Mahants or religious heads and induced them to open the secret of their cipher alphabet. Thus they succeeded in bringing up to the surface the Mahānubhāva literature long buried underground. This work is still being carried on and a great volume of Marathi literature anterior to and contemporaneous with the writings of Dnyāneśvar and Mukundrāj (till now regarded as the pioneers and founders of Marathi literature) has come to light. So even in a brief review of old Marāthi we must refer to this interesting chapter in its literary history.

According to the newly discovered Marathi literature, the founder of Mahānubhāva sect was named Harpāldev alias Cakradhar. He was descended from a Gujarāti Nāgar Brahmin family. His father Viśāldev was originally the minister of a Gujarāt ruler but the kingdom was handed over to Viśāldev as the ruler died childless. After the death of Viśāldev Harpāldev came to the throne and ruled the kingdom for a long time. Towards the close of his life, how-

ever, he left his kingdom and became a recluse and came to Ruddhapur, a town in Berar, where he met a saint called Govind Prabhu. Govind Prabhu made him his disciple, gave him the title of Cakradhar and asked him to establish a new sect. Thus, Cakradhar became the founder of a sect which he called Mahānubhāva Panth. He preached in Marathi and made disciples. Cakradhar did the work of spreading his sect from 1263 to 1271 when he finally retired to Badrik-āśram. He regarded Kṛṣṇa and Dattātraya as his special objects of devotion. Of course he was against making images of these Gods. During the short period of 8 years Cakradhar made 500 disciples. They spread the new doctrine far and wide. Cakradhar did not himself write any book. But his actual utterances and sayings were collected together by his disciple Mahīndrabhat. These works known as Ācāryasūtra and Siddhāntasūtrapāṭh became the first religious books of Mahānubhāva sect. He also wrote a life of Cakradhar named Līlācaritra. These works are in prose and may be regarded as the earliest known form of Marathi literature. Bhāskarācārya was also a disciple of Cakradhar and he wrote a poetic work called Śiśupālavadha. This is the first Marathi epic having a literary claim. Thus the Mahānubhāva sect gave a great impetus to Marathi literature both religious and secular. The sect spread far and wide. It was adopted by the Yādava rulers of Devgiri. Even after the fall of the Devgiri dynasty and the establishment of Mohammedan rule in Mahārāṣṭra the Mahānubhāva sect did not lose the royal favour as they were regarded as non-idolatrous by the Mohammedan rulers. So they secured privileges and concessions from these rulers such as exemption from taxes. But on account of this favour of the foreign rulers the Mahānubhāvas lost the sympathy of the people. Moreover, from this time they began to write their literary works in a cipher alphabet the key to which was not explained to anybody except to the initiated people of their sect. Thus the whole Marathi literature developed by writers of this sect, whether it was religious or secular, remained a sealed book

and continued as an underground current which was discovered only in recent times. But modern research has brought out more than a dozen Marathi works in prose anterior to the works of Mukundrāj and Dnyāneśvar regarded till now as the first literary writers in Marathi.

#### VĀRKARĪ LITERATURE

Mukundrāj and Dnyāneśvar are, like Castor and Pollux, the twin stars of old Marathi literature. But tradition gives the palm to Dnyāneśvar and regards him as the father and maker of that literature though the same tradition gives time precedence to Mukundrāj. But there is not sufficient evidence to establish this point. For, while the time of Dnyāneśvar is absolutely certain, he having given the exact year of the completion of his master-piece, the Dnyāneśvarī, that of Mukundrāj is not equally certain. Here tradition seems the only evidence. If we look to internal evidence it points to a conclusion contrary to the tradition. For the language and style of Mukundrāj looks a little more modern than that of Dnyāneśvar. But as it is wellknown that the Dnyāneśvarī, the master-piece of Dnyāneśvar, was modernised by Eknāth, so the works of Mukundrāj too may have been modernised by some unknown hand. Thus the argument based on the modern style of the texts of Mukundrāj's works does not prove anything. The best way out of the difficulty is to respect the old tradition and regard Mukundrāj as the older poet-saint. Mukundrāj is credited with having written *Vivekasindhu* and *Paramāmṛta*. Both these are philosophical poems and are written in the Marathi *Oṣī* metre. These poems give the Vedānt doctrines of Śaṅkarācārya but being written in the then Marathi language they were capable of being understood by the common people. But Mukundrāj's works do not seem to have become very popular and hence Mukundrāj did not come to be recognized as the father of old Marathi literature. That honour was reserved for Dnyāneśvar.

## THE FATHER OF MARATHI LITERATURE

Dnyāneśvar was not only the father and maker of old Marathi literature but he was also the founder of a new religious sect in the Marathi-speaking country. His life and history are as interesting and impressive as are his literary works. So let us briefly refer to them here.

Dnyāneśvar came of a devout Brahmin family living in Appegāv in the heart of Mahārāṣṭra. His father Viṭṭhalpant had, from his youth, a tendency towards a recluse's life of solitude and meditation. Fortunately for Viṭṭhalpant, he was married to a girl who was equally devout and so both of them pulled on very well. Rukmiṇī was the name of Dnyāneśvar's mother and like every Hindu lady she longed for a son and did penance for it. But Viṭṭhalpant became more and more estranged from worldly concerns of life and pressed his wife to give him permission to become a formal and regular Sannyāsī. Rukmiṇībāī, yielding to the incessant pressure of her husband, gave her consent though in the heart of her hearts she longed for a son. Immediately on getting permission, unwilling though it was, from his wife, Viṭṭhalpant went straight to Benares and received the orders of a Sannyāsī from a Svāmī by name Śrīpād. Soon after, the Svāmī happened to halt at Alandi on his way to Rāmeśvar. Rukmiṇī the wife of Viṭṭhalpant had come to stay at Alandi with her parents. She, while doing penance, fell at the feet of the new Svāmī who had come from Benares. The Svāmī gave her the usual benediction that she might get a son. Rukmiṇībāī seemed puzzled. So, the Svāmī made inquiries and came to know that the lady was the wife of Viṭṭhalpant whom he had allowed to take the orders of a Sannyāsī. Seeing her sorrow he went back to Benares and asked Viṭṭhalpant to return home and perform the duties of the household and fulfil the wish of his wife, saying that in doing such a thing he would incur no sin. In accordance with the request of his guru Viṭṭhalpant returned home and resumed his life as a house-holder. Rukmiṇībāī was glad to see her husband

back, taking up again the duties of the household. Her desire to have a son was more than gratified by her having three sons and one daughter. All the children were brought up properly and soon the time for the thread-ceremony of the sons came up. Here arose a religious difficulty. According to the orthodox view a Sannyāsi has no caste and the sons of a Sannyāsi are not entitled to the thread-ceremony. But considering the keen desire of the parents and sons, the local priests agreed to perform the ceremony provided the learned pandits and Śāstris of Paṭhaṇ pronounced such a course as being right and proper. The three sons, accordingly, went to Paṭhaṇ. There Dnyāneśvar proved his knowledge of the Śāstras and his miraculous power by making a he-buffalo recite the Vedas. Seeing this knowledge and power of Dnyāneśvar, the Pandits of Paṭhaṇ gave the required permission. Then the thread-ceremony was duly performed. It was after this formal initiation into Brahminhood that Dnyāneśvar began the writing of his famous exposition of the Bhagavadgītā in Marathi verse. After the completion of this great work in 1290 A. D. Dnyāneśvar took his master-piece to Benares the great repository of the religious and philosophic learning of the Hindus. There the learned pandits examined Dnyāneśvar with regard to his religious and philosophic knowledge and were astonished to see the young man a master of these abstruse sciences and capable of holding his own in discussions about them. They were also surprised to see his mastery over the Marathi language in which his exposition of the Bhagavadgītā was written. Thus, Dnyāneśvar came triumphantly out of the difficult ordeal and was able to attract disciples and followers. He soon returned home and laid the foundation of his Nāth Panth or Bhaktimārga. Since he regarded Viṭṭhal, the God of Pandharpur, as the symbol of Godhood and since he asked his disciples to make their annual pilgrimage or *vārī* to Pandharpur, the sect soon came to be called the Vārkarī Panth, a name which all the



followers of Dnyāneśvar love so much. They soon had a badge of their sect, a garland of tulsi plant and a pink flag of devotion. The Bhāvārth Dipikā or *Dnyāneśvarī* (the name given by the public to the master-piece), the exposition of the Bhagavadgītā, became widely known and was widely read and recited.

#### THE DNYĀNEŚVARĪ

The lucidity, the power of giving illustrations, the dialogue form, methodical treatment of the subject, mastery over the abstruse metaphysics and above all the wonderful and melodious vocabulary and rhythm—these unique characteristics of the *Dnyāneśvarī* mark the work as a master-piece in old Marathi literature. Hence, soon after its publication the book became the gospel of the new Varkari sect and verses from it were daily read and recited not only by the regular followers of the sect but also by the general public. But Dnyāneśvar's devotional songs and prayers in simpler and plainer Marathi were chanted and recited both by the literate and the illiterate public. These fine devotional songs and prayers have maintained their popularity even to this day. Such is their melodious diction.

Besides these two works Dnyāneśvar wrote a purely philosophical work called *Amṛtānubhava* in Marathi. This work was evidently intended for the philosophically-minded people. It is very abstruse and difficult and though it is revered and respected by the followers of Dnyāneśvar it is rarely read.

These three works constitute the sole literary output of Dnyāneśvar. But they are the permanent ornaments of old Marathi literature and will remain so for generations together.

After these literary achievements Dnyāneśvar died a premature death at the age of 22. But his literary work was carried on by his brothers and his sister though their

total output is far less than and inferior to that of Dnyāneśvar. It is interesting to see that the whole family was endowed with literary talent and all of them contributed more or less to the enrichment and refinement of old Marathi literature. Curiously enough, all of them died prematurely.

#### NĀMDEV

The younger contemporary of Dnyāneśvar was Nāmdev. He came of a family of Śimpī (tailor) caste. Nāmdev's family joined Dnyāneśvar's new sect. This indicates how the sect appealed particularly to the lower classes and castes of Hindu society. That the teaching of Dnyāneśvar was permeating even the lower strata of society is proved by the fact that during the century following the death of Dnyāneśvar saints and poets were found among all castes and they all prayed to Viṭṭhal, made their annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur and wore the two famous badges of the sect. Nāmdev was converted to the new sect by Visobā Khecar, a Vānī (grocer) by caste, who had become the disciple of Sopāndev, the brother of Dnyāneśvar. Thus the tradition of handing on the secret teaching of the sect from the preceptor to the disciple was followed. Nāmdev's conversion to Dnyāneśvar's sect was a great asset. As Nāmdev was not a learned Brahmin like Dnyāneśvar, his Marathi verses were written in the simple and terse language of the masses. So they appealed more to them than the comparatively learned writings of Dnyāneśvar. Nāmdev's songs and prayers became more popular as he established the practice of pilgrimage to Pandharpur and as the increasing number of Vārkarīs heard his songs sung by himself. By his long life also Nāmdev contributed to the spread of the new devotional literature of the Vārkarī Panth in the nooks and corners of the Marathi-speaking country.

Dnyāneśvar and Nāmdev between them cover a full century in which Marathi literature was influencing the

life and conduct of the people and was in turn influenced by them.

#### RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN THE SECTS

Between Nāmdev and Eknāth, another famous saint and poet, there is a gap of about 200 years. For according to tradition Nāmdev died in 1350 A. D., while Eknāth was born in 1548 A. D. During this long period, the Mohammedan power was in the ascendant in Mahārāṣṭra. Consequently there was no encouragement for Marathi literature as there was in the time of Mukundrāj and Dnyāneśvar and for a short period after them. But the Vārkarī Panth was not much disturbed and so the literary tradition was continued. No poet of outstanding merit arose during this period though there must have been lesser lights keeping the literary flame a-glow but giving only a dim light. However, during this period two great saints whose fame has continued even to these days did arise in Mahārāṣṭra. Their names are Nṛsimhasarasvati and Janārdan Svāmī. Both of them were highly respected by the public of their time. A few songs and prayers are regarded as their composition. But it is obvious that they did not shine in the literary field at all. A disciple of Nṛsimhasarasvati wrote a work called 'Gurucaritra'. This work describes the origin and history of the three-faced god Dattātraya. The curious thing about this book is that though the author did not attain any fame or name as a literary man his work came to be regarded as a gospel of Dattātraya worship. This worship became very popular and hence the work itself became sacred and it was itself worshipped as a symbol of God. Even now many orthodox Brahmins worship this book. Another feature of the period seems to be the cessation of estrangement between the Mahānubhāva and the Nāth or Vārkarī sects. As stated before these two sects began their career at the same time. At first there was a rivalry between them. Later on the Mahānubhāva sect became discredited because of its having secured undue concessions from the Mohammedan rulers.

But during the period that elapsed between Nāmdev and Eknāth, the Mahānubhāva sect lost its privileged position and so there came a rapprochement between them. Hence many followers of the Vārkarī sect became Mahānubhāvas and gave their compositions to that sect. Mahānubhāvas, from the beginning, were worshippers of Dattātraya. So this worship became the common tie between them and the new worshippers of Dattātraya adopted Gurucaritra as a sacred book of the new sect.

### EKNĀTH

Now comes on the stage of Mahārāṣṭra a great saint and a greater poet, Eknāth. The life of Eknāth is both interesting and ennobling and so it is worth telling it here briefly. As referred to above, Eknāth was born in 1548 A. D. He came of a devout Brahmin family. From his early boyhood he had a yearning for devotion to God. He was left an orphan, his parents having died suddenly and prematurely. So he was brought up by his grand-father Cakranārāyaṇa. Immediately after his thread-ceremony Eknāth began the usual studies of a Brahmin and being a precocious boy he soon became well-versed in the usual lore. He had a desire to be a disciple of the famous Saint Janārdan Svāmī and so he went to Daulatābād and learnt at the feet of the famous Svāmī. Eknāth here studied the two philosophical books of Dnyāneśvar, the Dnyāneśvarī and the Amṛtānubhava. He was greatly influenced by these books and he began to hold in great reverence the author of these books. From them he received his inspiration to write in the Marathi language and add to its literature. Janārdan Svāmī seeing the brilliant intellect of his disciple encouraged him to write and teach the people what he had imbibed from Dnyāneśvar's works. According to the advice of his guru, Eknāth at once began his career as a poet. First he composed an exposition of a small work called *Catuślokā Bhāgvata*. It was so well done that Janārdan Svāmī asked Eknāth to take up the more difficult work — the exposition.

of the famous eleventh chapter of the great Bhāgvat. This exposition is known as *Eknāthī Bhāgvata*. This is Eknāth's literary master-piece as Dnyāneśvarī is that of Dnyāneśvar. This work of Eknāth is the second great literary work in old Marathi. It is read by thousands of men and women who regard it as a sacred book like the Gurucaritra.

#### EKNĀTH'S NARRATIVE POETRY

Having done what his guru had told him to do, Eknāth went on writing work after work. For he had developed a simple flowing style and he was a great story-teller. He made use of the two great Sanskrit epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata and took out from them interesting and instructive stories and episodes as subjects for his famous poems. These became more popular than his great philosophical work, the Eknāthī Bhāgvata. The object of these poems was the entertainment and instruction of people both young and old, men and women. For these poems contained exciting incidents from the lives of the mythological heroes depicted in the two great epics. This poetry of Eknāth belongs to the class of narrative poetry. Its purpose is, therefore, secular instruction and innocent entertainment. Eknāth went on bringing out poem after poem till his death. Thus he became the founder of secular narrative poetry in Marathi. One important task of Eknāth remains to be mentioned. He revised the Dnyāneśvarī and brought out a correct and intelligible version of it. During the long period since the death of Dnyāneśvar, the Marathi language underwent great changes even though it was being used by many a poet. Consequently the language of the Dnyāneśvarī became obscure and unintelligible. Moreover, through the ignorance and negligence of scribes the text of the Dnyāneśvarī got corrupted. Eknāth published a fine version of the famous poem. This is the version that people of these days have regarded, and do still regard, as the original Dnyāneśvarī.

## EKNĀTH, THE SOCIAL REFORMER

So far I have given an account of the literary works, great and small, of Eknāth. I must now refer to his teaching and especially to the courage with which he put his teaching into practice—a courage which appeals even to modern minds. Eknāth taught the oneness of God and all-pervading nature of the God-head. He taught that God created all human beings, nay, all animate and inanimate creatures. So all are the creation of God. As such all men are the children of God. There is nothing like superiority and inferiority among men. All are equal and hence all should be regarded as brothers and treated with love and sympathy. To help the needy and the poor, to remove the grief and sorrow of the afflicted and, above all, to love all mankind, was the main burden of Eknāth's teaching. Eknāth not only taught these ennobling views of his but he actually practised them. Let me recite one or two incidents in Eknāth's life with regard to this. Eknāth was regarded as a radical reformer by orthodox Brahmins who detested his views. And though he performed all the religious rights he was boycotted by them. Once the Brahmins refused to come to his house to partake of the food prepared on the occasion of his father's death anniversary day. Eknāth gave all the food to the Mahārs (untouchables) who were looking at the food with longing eyes. On another occasion he actually went to the house of an untouchable and partook of the food prepared by his family. On a third occasion he brought home a dirty crying child and taught people a lesson of kindness by removing the child's dirt. Thus Eknāth was a fine example of the famous Marathi saying, 'Bole taisā cāle tayāci vandāvi pāūle.' (He who acts up to his teaching should be revered and worshipped.) After leading such a noble life Eknāth died in 1599 A. D. at the age of 52. Though in his lifetime he was persecuted and boycotted by the Brahmins, he was highly respected by the general public and especially by the so-called lower classes of Hindu society and his name

became coupled with that of Dnyāneśvar as a great saint and poet of Mahārāṣṭra.

#### MUKTEŚVAR

The practice of writing secular narrative poetry started by Eknāth was continued and developed by Mukteśvar, the grandson of Eknāth by his daughter. Mukteśvar was born in 1608 A. D. As his father led rather a wayward life Mukteśvar was brought up by Eknāth and was taught early in his life to read Sanskrit and Marathi. He must have particularly studied the works of Dnyāneśvar, Nāmdev and his grandfather. He seems to have been influenced greatly by the works of his grandfather; he must have been fired with the ambition of emulating, nay excelling, him. So he began his literary career by composing Rāmāyaṇa early in his youth. As a narrative poem it is not a very successful production. Its style is still crude and uncouth. But the narration is good and it shows here and there flashes of his poetic genius. But his Mahābhārata is a work of his mature genius. It is deservedly regarded as the best example of a great narrative poem in old Marathi literature capable of being very well compared with any English narrative poem. Mukteśvar is reputed to have brought up his narrative to the very end of the Mahābhārata comprising 18 Parvas. He wrote the whole poem giving in his own style and manner the story of the great Sanskrit epic. But unfortunately only four Parvas are available now. What became of the remaining Parvas is a mystery. But recently two more Parvas — the Sauktika and Śānti Parvās — have been discovered. So in time others may be found. Of the available Parvas the Ādi Parva (the first Parva) is by far the best of Mukteśvar's production. It shows the poet at his best. His power of vivid description, his capacity to appeal to the several sentiments of the reader, and his clear, sweet and vigorous style are to be seen in every verse of the poem.

Mukteśvar wrote many smaller poems and miscellaneous pieces also. He is reputed to have written an exposition

of the Bhāgvata in the Ovi metre. But unfortunately that also is not available at present.

Muktesvar lived to to a fairly old age and died in 1660 A. D.

#### MINOR POETS

There were two or three lesser lights who contributed to the growth of the old Marathi literature and who, therefore, deserve mention even in this brief narrative. They are Ramāvallabhdās, Śivakalyāṇa and Lolimbrāj.

Ramāvallabhdās came of the rich family of an official of the Daulatābād ruler. His original name was Tukopant. While still young Tukopant had to go to attack an enemy of his ruler. He routed the enemy's army and in the loot accidentally came across an exposition of the eleventh chapter of the Bhāgvata. He regarded this as a gift of God and began to read the book daily. He was greatly influenced by the teachings of the book. He soon met a saint by name Lakmidhar who initiated him into his order and named him Ramāvallabhdās. He wrote several works which are more in the style of Dnyāneśvar than in that of Muktesvar. Consequently his inferior expositions of the Bhagavadgītā, Śāṅkarabhāṣya and Bhāgvata remained comparatively unknown and unpopular.

Śivakalyāṇa, a contemporary of Ramāvallabhdās, returned to the more popular poetry i. e., narrative poetry and he composed a great poem on the tenth chapter of the Bhāgvata in which the amorous doings of Kṛṣṇa with the Gopis are described in detail. Some parts of this great poem border on the obscene and the vulgar. Still the poem is a readable one.

Lolimbrāj came from Junnar near Poona. His great work is on a medical subject though it is in verse. He also wrote a poem on the tenth chapter of Bhāgvata. He composed many devotional songs and prayers which are sweet and melodious.



## TUKĀRĀM

In the history of old Marathi literature Tukārām occupies a unique position. The poets considered so far may with some plausibility be considered to be mere translators or adaptors of Sanskrit poems who had no real poetic talent. But Tukārām was a man of true genius. All his poetry was original and came out of his own wonderful inspiration. Unlike all other poets and saints of Mahārāṣṭra, Tukārām was a poet of introspection both individual and social. He looked into his own mind and into the social mind with his keen intellect and found out the failings and foibles both in himself and in the society of his time. He mercilessly exposed and ridiculed them with a view to remove and correct them. By satire, by ridicule, by cajolery and by supplication, he tried his best to reform the society of his time. Thus he was a radical reformer of social customs and ideas. He had a righteous indignation against the prevailing hypocrisy and vices of his time, and in his poems he earnestly implored his countrymen to reform their way of life. Terseness, clarity, vigour and earnestness are to be seen in every line of Tukārām's verses. Hence they touch the very heart of the reader and wean him unconsciously from the evil ways of living. The influence of Tukārām over the men of his time was wonderful and even now that influence has not waned. Thus Tukārām comes under the class of saints and teachers who have been prophets of all ages. Tukārām and Socrates, though born at different times and in different countries, so curiously resemble each other in their life and conduct, that a theosophically minded reader will say that the soul of Socrates entered the body of Tukārām for the purpose of self-improvement and ultimate salvation.

## TUKĀRĀM AND SOCRATES

Both of them came to be recognized as great saints; both of them gave all their time and energy to public benefit, having no thought of their self-interest; they entirely

devoted themselves to the teaching of the people of their respective countries; they never thought of their bodily comforts or concerns, being fully absorbed in things divine; both were devotees of the one true God; both hated hypocrisy and ritualism from the bottom of their hearts and exposed and ridiculed them in public. Like the similarity in their mental life there was a wonderful similarity in their surroundings and circumstances. Both of them came from what was regarded as a lower stratum of society; for Socrates was the son of a stone-cutter while Tukārām was the son of a grocer. Both of them by their intrinsic merit and good work attained the highest position in their respective societies. Both of them led a very simple life not caring for the pleasures and luxuries of life; they never became recluses but had wives and children; both had wives who were notorious termagants, the wife of Socrates excelled in this respect, so much that her name Xanthippi, came to be a common name for a termagant. Lastly, both of them were persecuted by the orthodox people of their respective countries. Socrates had to drink a cup of hemlock by way of punishment for his supposed crime of teaching heterodoxy to young men. The Hindus of Tukārām's times were a tolerant people and though they persecuted him and made him give up his teaching and writing in a heterodox way, they did not go to the length of any further punishment. However, in one or two respects these two saints differed from each other very widely. Socrates never wrote a single line. His teaching was all oral — given in conversation with the young and the old. His conversation was so interesting and inspiring that the people of Athens, especially the young, were attracted and Socrates was always surrounded by groups of young men. Fortunately what Socrates said in his conversations was taken down and carefully preserved by his devoted disciples, Plato and Xenophon. But such was not the case with Tukārām. He too spent all his life in giving public discourses and in them composed *ex-tempore* songs and verses;

but he carefully wrote them down or dictated them to his disciples. So Tukārām's writings are all available in his own or his disciples' handwriting. In another important respect too, Socrates and Tukārām differed from each other. Socrates was impressed by the prevailing ignorance of his people and all his energy was devoted to the removal of this ignorance. He was a great believer in the method of knowledge, both secular and religious, and it was his firm conviction that such double knowledge led to the salvation of man. But Tukārām was a great believer in devotion to God as the true path of salvation. He felt that the people of his time went wrong because they did not know the true way to salvation. This true way, according to Tukārām, was heart-felt devotion and annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur.

After this long-drawn comparison between Socrates and Tukārām let me now briefly refer to the life and career of Tukārām.

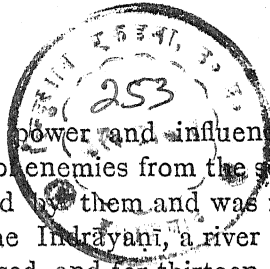
#### LIFE OF TUKĀRĀM

Tukārām was born at Dehū, near Poona, in 1608 A. D. He was a Śūdra by caste but Vaiśya by profession. Tukārām's ancestor Viśvambhar was a devotee of God Viṭhobā of Pandharpur and had built a temple for the God at Dehū. Thus the worship of Viṭhobā was an established practice in the family and so Tukārām, from his early boyhood, had taken to the worship of Viṭhobā. At the age of 13 Tukārām lost his parents and his elder brother became a recluse and left the house, and so the young Tukārām had to shoulder the burden of the whole family with his two wives and children and his younger brother. For some time he carried on his profession in an efficient way. But days of difficulty and adversity came. There was a great famine in the land. Tukārām lost his cattle and there was nothing to eat. His wife and some other members of the family died of starvation. Under the weight of this great calamity Tukārām turned more and more to the worship of Viṭṭhal.

He began to like solitude and meditation and so he went to a hill near his village and there spent days and nights in study and meditation. He forgot all about his family and its difficulties. His second wife and sons searched for him and brought him home. But he could not be made to take interest in the household concerns. He became more and more absorbed in study and meditation. Soon after, he felt inspired and from that time began to compose songs and verses and began the practice of giving public kīrtans (sermons). His exposition of radical views, his exposure of failings and foibles of the people about him, his earnest appeal to people to give up hypocrisy and turn to the worship of God Viṭṭhal as the simple and sure means of salvation, were so impressive and instructive that his name spread far and wide, attracting people to his discourses from far and near. His fame reached the ears of Śivājī, the founder of the Marāṭhā Svarājya, and once Śivājī came to his discourse incognito and was so much impressed by Tukārām's teaching of resignation and retirement from worldly affairs, that Śivājī was prepared to give up his great effort of founding the Hindu Empire. But when Tukārām came to know of this evil effect of his teaching on Śivājī, he purposely requested Śivājī to attend his discourse again. In this discourse Tukārām dwelt at length upon the sacredness of the duty of rulers to their subjects and upon the necessity of devoting all their energy to the good of the subjects and suggested that such disinterested performance of duty was the way to salvation for persons like Śivājī who occupied a high rank in society. This earnest, inspiring and impressive appeal of Tukārām went home to Śivājī's heart and he returned to his kingly duties with greater zeal and energy. Such is the wonderful power of persuasion possessed by inspired saints !

#### A MIRACLE

Thus Tukārām became a great poet and saint. He made verses suitable to the occasion on the spur of the



moment. But all this wonderful power and influence of Tukārām raised against him a host of enemies from the selfish orthodox camp. He was persecuted by them and was made to throw all his verse-books into the *Indrāyanī*, a river adjoining Dehū. Tukārām got depressed and for thirteen days prayed to Viṭṭhal. On the fourteenth day the verse-books arose out of the river, dry! This is one of the miracles reported about Tukārām. This miracle silenced Tukārām's enemies and many of them became his staunch followers and disciples. But after this Tukārām began to see that his physical powers were waning and he felt that this was a divine call for him to go to heaven so as to be near his God at all times. This was probably a prognostic of his coming end. Another miracle reported about Tukārām is that he ascended heaven in a baloon with his physical body. It appears that Tukārām suddenly left his village and was no more to be seen. He, therefore, must have voluntarily taken a *jala-samādhi* (plunge in the river) and got drowned. As his body was never discovered he was supposed to have gone to heaven in person. Such is probably the explanation of the strange story of his physical ascension to heaven which became current among the people.

#### RĀMDĀS

Some enthusiasts of Marathi literature have cried up Rāmdās, the poet and saint, to the skies. They regard him not only as a poet-saint but also as a great statesman and the political guru of the great Śivājī. According to them Śivājī was really influenced by Rāmdās as regards his political goal and that he every now and then consulted Rāmdās and acted up to his advice and so the sole credit of contributing to establish the *Mahārāṣṭra Svarājya* belongs to Rāmdās. How far this extraordinary claim is substantiated by the internal evidence of the writings of Rāmdās or by the external evidence of contemporary writers, we shall discuss when we come to consider his writings and his doings.

It is a fortunate thing that we know more about the life of Rāmdās than of any other poet-saint of his time. But these details are supplied by his followers a century after Rāmdās' death. So they must be accepted with great caution. But in the first place let me refer to the account of his life which is indeed interesting. His life seems to be divided into four periods in which is discovered a continuous development of his character.

### LIFE OF RĀMDĀS

Rāmdās was born in 1608 A. D., at Jāmbgāv on the Godāvarī river in a part of the Mahārāṣṭra country which is now included in the Nizam's territory. His father was Sūryājipant Ṭhosar and his mother Rāṇubāi. Both of them were very pious and virtuous. The original name of Rāmdās was Nārāyaṇa. He was regarded by his followers as an avatār of Māruti, the servant of Rāma who was the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa. Hence Nārāyaṇa began to call himself Rāmdās (literally, the servant of Rāma) and later on he came to be called Samarth meaning powerful. According to the orthodox Hindu custom, Sūryājipant wished to marry Nārāyaṇa to a suitable girl when Nārāyaṇa was 12 years of age. Everything was ready and while the priests, performing the marriage ceremony of Nārāyaṇa, were reciting auspicious verses (*maṅgalūṣṭake*), each verse ending with the word *attention* (*sāvadhān*), Nārāyaṇa suddenly bolted, to the surprise and astonishment of the assembled gathering. Here the first period of Nārāyaṇa's life ends and the second period of preparation for his life's work begins. Nārāyaṇa or Rāmdās, (the name permanently adopted by him), went straight to Pāncavaṭī and there practised religious penance along with the acquisition of the old and the new learning for full twelve years. This was the second period of his life. In the third period Rāmdās travelled over the length and breadth of the whole of India and visited all places of worship from Benares to Rāmeśvar and from Dvārakā to

Jagannāthpurī, acquiring varied experience and knowledge of the customs and ideas in the different parts of the country. By these long travels covering a period of twelve years Rāmdās made a thorough preparation for the work of his life: he made up his mind to establish a new sect of the worshippers of Rāma, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa. Thus ended the third period of his life. So, after attaining years of maturity Rāmdās returned home and met his mother and told her and his brother his future plan of life. Then he moved about trying to find out a suitable place to found his math for the new worship. At last he selected Cāphaḷ in the Satara district as a suitable site and there built a temple of Rāma and Hanumān and gathered disciples about him. An annual festival of Rāma was celebrated by Rāmdās who got the necessary money by begging. Soon Rāmdās felt the need of writing an authoritative book for his new sect for the worship of Rāma and hence he betook himself to a retired place in the Sahyādri range, (the Western Ghats), leaving the management of his math to his disciples. In this place of confinement, Rāmdās lived for full ten years and completed his contemplated authoritative work. This work is called *Dāsboḍh* (teaching of the servant of Rāma). This is a great book. It is Rāmdās' masterpiece and it deservedly ranks as an inspiring and impressive literary work in the old Marathi language. It is on the authority of this book that the enthusiasts of Marathi literature regard Rāmdās as a political guru of Śivājī and a prophet of Mahārāṣṭra. I shall come to this work immediately, but let me bring to an end the story of Rāmdās' life. While Rāmdās was confined to his place of retirement his disciples went to Rājā Śivājī and gave him information about their guru and his new math. Śivājī was impressed by the account and he sanctioned a cash grant of 200 hons (gold coins) to the math. After Śivājī had conquered the Satara and Parāḷī forts and their surrounding country he remembered that Rāmdās lived near about and hence expressed a desire to meet him. By this time Rāmdās had returned to his math. So

he was glad to receive Śivāji Rājā at his math. Śivāji was so much impressed by the imposing personality of Rāmdās and his wonderful conversational powers that he made up his mind to become his disciple and expressed his desire to that effect. Rāmdās and his disciples were delighted to secure such a royal patron for their new math. Accordingly Rāmdās himself initiated Śivāji into the regular order of his disciples and taught him the characteristic mantra of his sect. It was when Śivāji made Rāmdās his spiritual guru that he presented him with the fort of Paraḷi which thenceforth came to be called Sajjangaḍ (the fort of the good) and gave grants of land for the expenses of the math. This took place in the year 1672 A. D. Thenceforward Śivāji paid visits to Rāmdās and particularly consulted him about his contemplated coronation at the Rāygaḍ Fort. Soon after his coronation Śivāji led a successful expedition to the Karnāṭaka and returned home with laurels. But he did not live long to enjoy the kingdom won with such super-human efforts. He died of gout at Rāygaḍ in 1680 A. D. Rāmdās was extremely sorry to hear about the death of his great disciple. He felt his loss very much. Rāmdās did not survive Śivāji long but died full of years in 1682 A. D., after having attained as great a name and fame as that of Dnyāneśvar and Tukārām.

Rāmdās wrote many miscellaneous poems, songs and verses and wrote also some narrative poetry. One small lyrical but instructive poem named 'Verses addressed to the mind' (Manāce Śloka) is very popular. Even now every Hindu boy and girl especially of the higher castes daily recite these verses. They are no doubt ennobling and inspiring. But the Dāsboḍh is, par excellence, the masterpiece of Rāmdās and his whole teaching is contained in that famous work. So let me give some idea of that book to my readers.

#### DĀSBODH — THE MASTERPIECE OF RĀMDĀS

The Dāsboḍh of Rāmdās is divided into ten books — each book consisting of several chapters. Chronologically the



great work is made up of two parts. The first seven books form a complete whole having a beginning and an end. Obviously it was composed at one stretch and there is a continuous line of thought in it. This part expresses in simple, terse, vigorous language the thoughts of Rāmdās about human life and its destiny, and about the nature of man, the universe and its creation by God. In fact, it gives in brief outline the philosophy of retirement and the way to attain true salvation by simple devotion to God, beginning with the service of a spiritual preceptor. It gives, in the allegory of a person, the life of a typical householder, from his youth to his old age. It shows how he begins his youthful life in sexual pleasure, but soon loses all his wealth, then his wife; owing to the pressure of his relatives and friends he marries a second time and the young wife quarrels with him. His house is looted by a Mohammedan and his wife is kidnapped. Thus he ends in misery. Such a picture of the dark and painful side of human life is depicted with a view to make a person disgusted with family life and earnestly to appeal to him to seek salvation by retirement from such a miserable existence. In short, this part of the Dāsbodh is similar to the writings of other saints and poets and shows Rāmdās to be a follower of the same pessimistic school of thought to which all other saints of Mahārāṣṭra belonged.

#### DOCTRINE OF WORLDLINESS

The second part of Dāsbodh appears to have been composed piece-meal. There is no continuous line of thought and there is much repetition. The same pessimistic view of life is depicted as in the first part. But another strain of thought is to be met with here and there. In this new vein of thought Rāmdās becomes a teacher of the optimistic view of life. He now maintains the high dignity of human life. He exhorts people to do their allotted work and duty with zeal and earnestness. He tells men to have ambition and to become famous by doing great

things. He now speaks openly of the tyranny of the rulers and asks people to take to political and military life and make a name for themselves. In this part he refers to the country and the patriotic duty of serving it. He now praises the life of the householder and exhorts men to serve their neighbours and to help the needy and the poor. It is this part of Rāmdās' teaching that appeals to modern educated men with western ideas. And some of the enthusiasts of Marathi literature have cried up these teachings of Rāmdās and they have tried to show that Rāmdās was a great statesman and inspirer of the youth of Mahārāṣṭra. As a further evidence of this, these enthusiasts point out that Rāmdās established maṭhs throughout the length and breadth of Mahārāṣṭra and even in the southern Maratha country as far as the river Kāverī. In each village there was to be a temple of Māruti and a gymnasium for physical and military training. Further, Rāmdās formed a secret order of bachelors and these bachelors took vows to do political and social work for the uplift of the country. All this may be true but it does not prove what the enthusiasts try to prove thereby. At most, the above facts show that Rāmdās was a more practical man than the other poet-saints. He had come to see the futility of the usual advice of the saints during the course of his long travels. So he made a change in his former teaching. He gave advice to people which was more practical that they should lead a life of usefulness by serving the society and the family. He further taught that self-improvement was equally a means of true salvation of the soul. For promulgating these new doctrines Rāmdās established his maṭhs and formed his bachelors' order so as to have an unfailing supply of public teachers to preach morality and patriotism. Rāmdās saw that the Vārkarī Panth did not appeal to the higher classes of Mahārāṣṭra. In order to attract them he established local centres of worship by way of the new temples of Rāma and Hanumān and by providing gymnasia for physical training—a feature which especially attracted the younger minds to his sect.

## RĀMDĀS AS THE GURU OF ŚIVĀJĪ

Now let me refer to another point of controversy before we take leave of Rāmdās. This point is about the true relationship between Śivājī and Rāmdās. That Śivājī became a disciple of Rāmdās and accepted him as his spiritual guru is an undoubted fact. This is proved by gifts of a permanent nature made to Rāmdās and his maṭh and by the gift of the Paralī fort near Satara for the residence of Rāmdās. The real question is, when did this take place? Those who want to establish that Rāmdās was a political as well as a spiritual guru of Śivājī try to prove that the date of their meeting was about the year 1647 A. D. while the actual date proved by documentary evidence is 1672 A. D. The date of the meeting is obviously put back purposely by the followers of Rāmdās in order to enhance the influence and prestige of Rāmdās. To me the true relationship between Śivājī and Rāmdās appears to be very well illustrated by the confluence of the two rivers the Ganges and the Yamunā. Both these rivers take their rise from the sacred Himalaya mountain; both of them run for a considerable part of their course parallel to each other, fertilising and enriching the country on their banks; their confluence takes place at Allahabad and then being united they take one name, the Ganges, and this united river joins the Bay of Bengal. So both Śivājī and Rāmdās were born in Mahārāṣṭra, both of them did their allotted work and benefitted the people of Mahārāṣṭra—one by freeing them from bondage and tyranny and the other by teaching them their duty to serve the society. They met and became related as disciple and spiritual guru and after doing good to their country and its people in their respective spheres left this worldly theatre. So both of these great men of Mahārāṣṭra are to be regarded as its makers.

As is natural with an inspiring teacher like Rāmdās he gathered about him and in his maṭhs a large number of disciples among whom there were a few ladies also. All of them

revered Rāmdās and regarded him as an avatār of Māruti. It is to this blind belief that many of the miracles attributed to Rāmdās are to be traced. It is said that Rāmdās assumed the form of Māruti now and then, that he could fly through the air for miles and miles, that he revived the life of a dead child and that he once fed the whole army of Śivājī by giving them a feast when apparently there was nothing in his hut. In this age of science and enlightenment no one can believe in such miracles. But they are uniformly attributed to many of the great saints of Mahārāṣṭra. Many disciples of Rāmdās have described these miracles wrought by him in their verse compositions in which biographical details of the life of Rāmdās are given.

#### LITERATURE UNDER MARĀṬHĀ RULE

Rāmdās died towards the close of the 17th century. The 18th century marked the rapid expansion of the Marāṭhā empire and towards the close of that century the empire showed signs of decline and fall. There was no need for religious propaganda. For the Mohammedan Empire having crumbled to dust, the domineering and aggressive attitude of the Mohammedan religion and its followers waned. The Hindus could hold their own in the possible struggle between the two religions. In fact, both learnt by bitter experience to live and let live. This change in the political conditions of India and of Mahārāṣṭra is reflected in the Marathi literature of the 18th century. Like the improvement of political condition this century also saw the highest development of Marathi literature and towards its close signs of decline began to manifest themselves. But during the rising tide a host of Marathi writers came forward. They now formed a class by themselves. They were not dominated by religious zeal nor were they themselves saints or spiritual guides. The need for such men having disappeared no supply was forthcoming. But according to the growing and improving taste of the people pure poets arose to give disinterested delight to their readers by secular poems and

versified stories from the two epics. They found also new material for their poems in the exploits of the heroes and warriors of the previous generation and of their own time, a subject that inspired them.

#### VĀMAN PANDIT

A foretaste of this 18th century poetry is given by the learned Vāman Pandit although he is a younger contemporary of Rāmdās. He was born at Bijapur about the year 1615 A.D. He was a precocious boy and learnt both Sanskrit and Persian when he was quite young. But he had to leave Bijapur for good, for fear of being forcibly converted to Mohammedanism. He went to Benares, visiting places of pilgrimage on his way. At Benares he devoted himself exclusively to the study of Sanskrit and in a few years became proficient in the main Sanskrit sciences. He now despised his own mothertongue, Marathi, and was proud of his Sanskrit learning. So he went from place to place, defeating the local Śāstrīs and Pandits in debate and winning laurels everywhere. After completing his northern tour Vāman Pandit turned to Mahārāṣṭra and there met Rāmdās. The latter severely expostulated with him for despising his mothertongue and exhorted him to apply his genius and learning to the service of Marathi literature. This was a turning point in the life of the great Pandit. He now seriously applied his mind to the study of old Marathi poets and naturally received inspiration from them. Thus he became proficient in Marathi as he already was in Sanskrit. The first use that Vāman Pandit made of his double proficiency was to translate the philosophical Sanskrit works into Marathi. First and foremost he translated the Bhagavadgītā verse by verse into fine and flowing Marathi and called it 'Samaślokī Gītā'. This is a literal translation of the original work. But Vāman Pandit was not satisfied with the translator's roll. He wanted to emulate Dnyāneśvar, the father of old Marathi literature. Hence he began an extended exposition

of the teachings of the Bhagavadgītā and soon completed that great work. He called it the 'Yathārth Dīpikā' (true commentary) as opposed to the 'Bhāvārth Dīpikā' (suggestive commentary) which was the alternative title of the Dnyāneśvari. This is no doubt a great work of Vāman Pandit. His great learning, his mastery of the Marathi language, his power of establishing his view after refuting opposed views, and lastly his persuasiveness in bringing home to his readers the obscure and difficult points in the teachings of the Bhagavad-gītā are manifest on every page of his great commentary. Vāman Pandit wrote another philosophical work named 'Nigamasāra'. This gives the substance of the Vedas in fine clear Marathi. He also wrote many small philosophical pieces. Having thus given to the Marathi — speaking public the benefit of his Sanskrit learning, Vāman Pandit devoted all his energy to writing secular narrative poetry so as to give disinterested delight to young and old. For the young people he selected beautiful incidents in the very interesting life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In these poems Vāman Pandit seems to have pandered to the vulgar taste of the common people. Some pieces in this class of poetry are certainly vulgar and obscene. But they are few and far between in the whole volume of his writing. Finally he adapted into fine and flowing Marathi verse the most popular Sanskrit poems, Bhartṛhari's Śatakas (three poems consisting of 100 verses each) and the famous 'Gaṅgālaharī' (Waves of the Ganges) of Jagannāth. Vāman Pandit's adaptations of these famous Sanskrit poems are so well done that no one reading the lucid verses of Vāman Pandit can ever detect that these poems are adaptations. They read like original poems of the author.

Vāman Pandit combined in himself erudite learning and poetic talent — a rare combination indeed. He died a fairly old man about the year 1678 A. D.

#### RAGHUNĀTH PANDIT

Raghunāth Pandit is another Marathi poet in whom the same learning and poetic talent a rare combination

is met with. The output of his genius is one short but beautiful poem with two others doubtfully attributed to him. Very little is known about Raghunāth Pandit. Till recently there was a great dispute among Marathi scholars about his name, profession, date and place of birth. But some light is now thrown on these points by recent researches carried on in connection with the editing of the great poem Nala-Damayanti Svayamvar. It is now nearly settled that the real author of Nala-Damayanti Svayamvar was born at Tanjore in Karnatak where Śahājī, the father of Śivājī, carved out a Jahāgīr for himself and his eldest son Vyañkojī. When Śivājī founded his new Kingdom and formed his cabinet of eight ministers, Raghunāth Pandit who was occupying an important office at Tanjore was brought from there and made one of the ministers with the title Panditrāv. He was entrusted with the management of the religious endowments of the State. Thus Raghunāth Pandit's career seems to cover a long period and is coeval with that of Śahājī and Śivājī. He is said to have survived Śivājī and then returned to Tanjore. As stated above the only great work which undoubtedly belongs to Raghunāth Pandit is Nala-Damayanti Svayamvar. Two more works i.e. Rāmdāsvarṇan and Gajendramokṣa are attributed to him. But they are much inferior to the famous poem which is undoubtedly his masterpiece. It is a short poem of about 269 verses in varied metres. But this poem is a real gem in Marathi literature and will ever remain the favourite of the Marathi reading public. The story of Nala is taken from Mahābhārat. It is in itself a romantic love story and it is very beautifully rendered into verse by the poet.

#### ŚRĪDHAR

The next poet to be noticed is unlike the two learned Pandits Vāman and Raghunāth. This poet's work is similar to that of Muktesvar and to the secular narrative poetry of Eknāth. His name is Śrīdhar. He was born in the year 1678 at the village of Nāzrā near Pandharpur. His

father was a Brahmin and Svāmi. So Śrīdhar too followed the example of his father and became a Sannyāsi at the age of 14 and made Pandharpur his home, leaving it at times to go out on holy pilgrimage from place to place. His early efforts at writing poetry were confined to smaller pieces like Śivalilāmṛta, Jaiminī Aśvamedha, Brahmottarakhaṇḍ and Pāṇḍuraṅg Māhātmya. These are fairly good poems, simple in style. But his fame and popularity are due to his three great poems Pāṇḍav-Pratāp, Harivijay and Rāmavijay. These are in fact Śrīdhar's poetical adaptations of the three great Sanskrit works Bhārat, Bhāgavat and Rāmāyaṇa. Though Śrīdhar's poems are adaptations, they read almost like original poems. Simplicity, sweetness of diction, lucid flow of narration and the nobleness of the themes have earned for these works such a height of popularity as is unequalled by the writings of any other poet. His thrilling descriptions and suggestive similes add charm to his poems. Like Dnyāneśvar, Eknāth and Rāmdās, Śrīdhar was an advocate of Marathi language and literature. He courageously told his audience that the Prākṛt language was in no way inferior to Sanskrit and that the former was as capable of expressing all kinds of thoughts and ideas as the latter. Finally his object in writing in Marathi was to educate the masses and especially women. This object of Śrīdhar has been completely fulfilled. All his poems are constantly read and recited by the public. They have served as sources of entertainment and instruction to the women folk of Mahārāṣṭra. Ever since their publication these three great poems of Śrīdhar have remained the most popular poems among the Marathi-speaking people, affording delight and noble instruction to young and old, men and women alike. Śrīdhar died at the age of 50 in the year 1728 at Paṭhan.

#### MADHVAMUNĪ

To the same class belongs a number of minor poets some of whom became better known than others. But it is



necessary to consider them here as their works show how Marathi poetry was becoming varied both in style and subject matter and how it dealt with secular and original subjects and stories. Madhvamunī is the first poet of this series. But his name is not much known nor are his poems familiar to the people. But he was the preceptor of the more famous poet Amṛtrāy and as such deserves some notice. Madhvamunī lived at Paṭhan and at Aurangābād. His birth date is not known but he died about the year 1753. He wrote a poem named 'Dhanēśvar' (Lord of Money). This is quite a secular story of a stingy man. It is written in *Ovi* metre. Another poem of his has been recently discovered but a part of the manuscript is not recovered as yet. But even the available part gives a good idea of the poem. It seems to be again an original story. It is named, 'Kathā Cov rāyāci' (story of King Cov). Pralhād Caritra, a fine short poem, is also attributed to him but whether it is really his or belongs to one of his disciples cannot be now ascertained.

#### AMṚTRĀY

Amṛtrāy is a farfamed poet. As stated already he was the disciple of Madhvamunī. Amṛtrāy was born in the year 1698. Though he was born and brought up in a village near Buldhānā in Berar Province, he lived at Aurangābād and did his poetic work there and died in 1753. Amṛtrāy is famous for introducing a new metre in Marathi named *Katāv*. This is a forcible rapidly running metre, full of rhymes, very effective in didactic and narrative poems. When a poem composed in this metre is recited the audience is simply enraptured while the singer goes on repeating *Katāv* after *Katāv* with well-measured modulation of tone. Amṛtrāy wrote most of his poems like the *Durvāsyātrā*, *Draupadīvastraharaṇ* and *Dhruvacaritra* in this favourite metre of his. He wrote in other metres also and some of his miscellaneous songs and padas are very popular.

## SOHIROBĀ

Sohirobā, much less known than Amṛtrāy, was more a saint than a poet and in fact may be said to belong to the earlier generation of saints. Sohirobā was a Gauḍ Sārasvat Brahmin. He was born in 1714 at Bāndā in Sāvāntvāḍī State on the western coast of the Bombay Presidency. Sohirobā's ancestors were hereditary accountants (Kūḷkarnīs) and so in his early life he served the Sāvāntvāḍī State in that capacity. Being tired of this worldly life he entered the order of a Sannyāsī at the age of 35. He practised yoga and became a great Vedāntin. He understood and realised the principles of the Vedānt. He then went on a tour of holy places and visited the saints of the time. While travelling through the territory of Mahāḍajī Śinde in the course of his tour, Sohirobā was able to meet the great warrior Mahāḍajī through the influence of Jivabā Dādā Bakṣī who was a Gauḍ Sārasvat Brahmin and held a high position in the service of Mahāḍajī. But this meeting proved an unhappy one. For, when Mahāḍajī who was fond of poetry was shown Sohirobā's poems, he did not seem to like them. But the large-hearted Sohirobā simply pitied Mahāḍajī.

This incident shows how Sohirobā was a real saint indifferent to worldly gain or position. Sohirobā died in the year 1789. The above rather detailed account of Sohirobā shows how all his poetical work was the outcome of his religious and Vedāntic zeal. All his so-called poems have very unfamiliar names like Akṣayabodha, Mahāḍānu-bhāveśvarī and Advayānanda. That is why Sohirobā's name does not figure among the poets and his works are very little known. But among the learned they are valued.

## MAHĪPATI

Mahipati was as popular as Śrīdhar and Amṛtrāy. He was born in the year 1715 at Tārābād a place about 40 miles from Ahmednagar. He belonged to the hereditary Deśastha Kūḷkarnī family. Accordingly in his

early life he did that work under the Mohammedan king of Ahmednagar. Once he was so ill-treated by a mere servant of the king that he took a vow not to serve anybody thenceforward. He became a regular pilgrim and visited Pandharpur every year. There was a terrible famine once. Mahīpati was so generous that he distributed all his grain to the poor and the starving. But, as a result, he became penniless and begged for his maintenance. He devoted all his time and energy to writing poetry. But his poetry is unique in the history of Marathi literature. It is not poetry so much as a biographical account of saints and poets. In fact, Mahīpati, though retired from life, maintained his interest in life and especially in the lives of the saints of his time and of previous generations. He made use of his pilgrimages in collecting detailed information about poets and saints. Then he made use of the material in writing his unique biographical works in verse. Mahīpati wrote in all four biographical poems or rather versified biographies. He gave very significant names to his works. They are Bhaktavijay (triumphs of devotees), Bhaktalīlāmṛt (wonderful doings of the devotees), Santavijay (exploits of saints) and Santalīlāmṛt (wonderful doings of the saints). In these four biographical works Mahīpati has left a very precious heritage to the posterity of Mahārāṣṭra. A great deal of what we now know of the poets and saints of Mahārāṣṭra is due to these valuable works. The works show how a sense of reality and importance of having historical accounts in literature was growing in the minds of the people of Mahārāṣṭra. This growing sense led to an entirely new class of fine literature in prose which began to make its appearance about this time and to which literature a reference will be made a little later in this brief and rapid survey of old Marathi literature. To return to Mahīpati's works. His Santalīlāmṛt was finished in the year 1757. It contains the lives of about 40 poets and saints. He wrote the Bhaktalīlāmṛt in 1762. It contains the lives of about 60 poets and saints. Besides these

biographical works. Mahipati composed short hymns on the various religious holidays of the Hindus i. e. Haritālikāvrata, Ṛṣipaṇcamivrat, Anantavrat, Tulasīmāhātmya, etc. All these are commonly read by devout Hindu ladies on the respective holidays. Among his other works the following are worth mentioning: Kathāsārāmṛta, Kṛṣṇalīlāmṛta and Saṇimāhātmya.

Mahipati's writings are all in *ovī* metre. His style is entirely plain and simple. Mahipati often uses fine similes to illustrate his point.

Mahipati was a versatile and voluminous writer. Thus he was the precursor of the age of Moropant to which we must now refer. He died in 1790 at the ripe age of 75.

#### MOROPANT

Now we come to the most versatile and voluminous writer among the poets of Mahārāṣṭra. His name is Moropant, or as he liked to call himself in his famous devotional poem, Mayūr (a peacock). Moropant is regarded as the greatest poet of Mahārāṣṭra by the learned men i. e. the Purāṇiks and Kirtankārs of the past and the present generation. But this view is not shared by men imbued with western ideas of literary criticism. They regard Moropant as a mere versifier with a facile pen and with a predilection for high-flown language full of figures of speech. They compare him with the English poet Pope who was highly thought of in his day but who has been regarded a mere versifier like Moropant by modern English critics. This led to a heated controversy about the position of Moropant among Marathi critics one school giving him the highest position, while the opposed school, giving him only a second rate or third rate position. As is usually the case in such controversies the truth lies between the extreme views. Looking to the vast volume of his poetry which contains many

a fine passage scattered throughout his poems one cannot subscribe to the view that Moropant was a mere versifier and only a second or third grade poet. But it is equally true that Moropant did not reach the highest watermark of Marathi poetry. He undoubtedly had poetic talent which is unmistakable throughout his poetical work, but it is equally true that he was fond of the Marathi *Āryā* metre and in his composition he overdid that metre which makes his poems a monotonous reading. Further, he was fond of acrostics and similar curiosities of versification. He actually wrote 108 *Rāmāyaṇas* in which all his feats of literary acrobatic art to be seen. But this predilection for superficial and meretricious beauties of versification detracted from the worth of his poems. Still there is no doubt that Moropant occupies a very high position among Marathi poets and he deservedly comes into the category of the great poets of *Mahārāṣṭra*. At any rate no poet of equal merit arose after his time and since his death a decline in Marathi poetry made its appearance.

#### LIFE OF MOROPANT

With this preliminary discussion let me now refer to his life and character. Moropant came from a Brahmin family living at *Panhālā* near *Kolhāpur* in the southern Maratha country. He was born in 1729. His early life was spent at *Panhālā* where he learnt at the feet of the *Pādhye* Brothers, famous for their Sanskrit learning. Moropant, being a precocious boy, acquired proficiency in Sanskrit early and began to give such excellent discourses, both religious and secular, on topics derived from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārat* that his fame reached the ears of the great *Jahāgirdār* and landlord of *Bārāmatī* named *Bābājī Nāik*. The *Nāik* was pleased to hear the fine *purāṇ* of Moropant and he immediately took him under his service with an honorarium of Rs. 500 per year. Moropant went to *Bārāmatī* and spent all his life there except for two years when he went to *Kāśī* and other holy places in

upper India and made occasional short pilgrimages to holy places near about his place of residence. At Bārāmātī Moropant had only to give a daily discourse or purāṇ and so he was free to devote the rest of his time to prosecute his studies in Sanskrit as well as in Marathi literature.

#### EARLY POEMS

Moropant began to compose poems at the age of 25 and he carried on his literary activity for full fifty years till his death. His first poetical piece was written in praise of Śaṅkar – his family God. But later on when a Brahmin presented to Moropant an image of Rāma he regarded it as a gift of God and thenceforward he worshipped Rāma till his death. After this Moropant wrote in rapid succession short but sweet poetical pieces especially for the entertainment and instruction of young people and in particular of girls. Striking stories were selected from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārat.

After these light poems Moropant took up the more serious work of his life and almost every year brought out at least one great poem. The first was an adaptation from the 10th chapter of the Bhāgvat in which the early life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was finely depicted, though its style was high-flown. This work is named 'Kṛṣṇavijay' (exploits of Kṛṣṇa). Subsequently he completed the whole of the Bhāgvat and called it 'Mantra-Bhāgvat' because he skilfully wove into his verses the great and famous mantra (religions formula) 'Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya' (Salutation to God Vāsudev). In this adaptation Moropant omitted the more abstruse and metaphysical parts of the original and dilated upon the narrative and anecdotal parts. Thus he tried to make his poem intelligible and interesting to the general public. Next, Moropant wrote at the desire and suggestion of his patron, the great poem 'Harivaṃśa'. This is a Marathi version of the Sanskrit poem of the same name. In this great work Moropant has narrated not only the early and later life of Kṛṣṇa and

his famous family but also the history of the Yādav dynasty to which he belonged. This work of Moropant is deservedly regarded as a fine fruit of his genius. Moropant had now attained the age of fifty. Still his powers were working with full vigour.

#### THE FIRST MARATHI EPIC

While Moropant brought out year after year his small and great poems in a continuous succession, he was all the while engaged in writing his master-piece, the version of the great Sanskrit epic Mahābhārat. He took full ten years to complete this master-piece. It was finally published when he was 53 years of age. This is really the first epic poem in Marathi literature. It is written in the *Āryā* metre. Moropant is seen at his best in this great work. His versatility, his varied knowledge, his mastery over the Marathi language, his power of vivid description, his capacity to rouse the several sentiments of his readers by narration of stirring scenes in stories and his dramatic skill in introducing striking dialogues in the stories told—all these characteristics of a great poet are visible everywhere in this great epic of the Marathi language.

Moropant must have felt that his life's work was really over. Still he went on writing and he did not leave his work till his death.

After finishing this great poem Moropant amused himself by writing again lighter poetic pieces in the form of the several Rāmāyaṇas referred to already. Of course these hundreds of short poems show how facile his pen was and how he wielded it for his own amusement as well as for that of the Marathi-knowing public.

But the crowning pieces of Moropant's poetry have still to be noticed. They are really very short pieces. Amidst his vast and varied poetical work they are like a drop in the ocean. But they are original and unique. They

came out of the depths of his heart. They are the highest water-mark of his genius. They prove without doubt that Moropant was a great poet with poetic genius. Both the pieces are devotional lyrics. One is called 'Saṃsāyaratna-mālā' (A Garland of gems of Doubt) and the other Kekāvali (Cries of a Peacock).

These poems are the gems of Marathi literature and they will ever remain so. Moropant died in the year 1794 A. D., after having done his life's work and after having attained everlasting fame as a great Marathi poet.

It is a curious coincidence that the literary career of Moropant was coeval with the most critical period of Marāṭhā History. Moropant was born during the reign of Śāhū and Bājirāv I and died just about the close of the rule of Savāi Mādhavrāv. This period of about 65 years marked the rapid expansion of the Marāṭhā Empire, the sudden and unexpected check that it received in the battle of Pānipat and lastly the rapid recovery of that Empire. Thus Moropant was fortunate enough to live in the hey-day of Marāṭhā supremacy. Soon after the death of Moropant signs of the decline and the fall of that Empire began to manifest themselves. Similar has been the fate of Marathi literature. Moropant's career marked the hey-day of Marathi poetry. But after his death a rapid decline of that literature began to manifest itself.

#### IMITATORS OF MOROPANT

The extreme popularity of Moropant led to the rise of a host of imitators who followed his style and his forms of poetry. The history of the rise and the fall of the Marāṭhā Empire too led to two new forms of literature referred to later on.

The whole period from 1794 A. D., the date of the death of Moropant, to the year 1818 A. D., the year of the commencement of the rule of the British East India Company



over Mahārāṣṭra, may be regarded as the closing period of the old Marathi literature and the beginning of the modern Marathi literature.

As already referred to there were hosts of imitators and servile versifiers who followed the example of Moropant and who were anxious to get fame and popularity similar to that of Moropant. These imitators and versifiers produced a great amount of literature but they could never attain real excellence. They could never catch the real spirit of Moropant's poetry. They mistook the superficial decorations of his poems as real beauty and thereby spoiled their writings. In fact, these imitators mark the decline of Marathi literature, though the running stream did not altogether stop. In fact it continued for some time after the modern literature had made its appearance under the influence of western culture brought into Mahārāṣṭra by the all-pervading rule of the British East India Company over India and especially over Mahārāṣṭra.

Let us then take a brief and rapid survey of this declining period of old literature as the concluding part of this long chapter which has made a survey of the old Marathi literature.

There is no doubt that even when the decline of Marathi literature was setting in and the stream was getting muddy, there were some writers who showed real poetic power. Unfortunately they had to prostitute their genius to satisfy the unhealthy and increasingly vicious taste of the public.

#### RĀM JOŚĪ

The two exceptional writers of this period are Rām Jośī and Anant Phandī. Rām Jośī was born in Sholapur in the year 1762 A. D. In his younger days he was a mischievous boy. Moreover, he sought bad and vulgar company among the low class boys of the town and became enamoured

ed of tamāsās. These tamāsās were something like operas in which, however, obscene and vulgar songs were recited by a boy dressed as a woman. The dancing and the dialogues were provided as the accompaniment. Young Rām took part in these tamāsās and composed verses in the favourite metre of the people. Rām Jośi's elder brother who was a renowned Kīrtankār and purāṇik scolded him severely. Rām Jośi left the house in anger and determined to show his brother that he too could perform kīrtans and explain Purāṇas like himself. So he went to Pandharpur and there learnt Sanskrit, studied the Purāṇas and other Sanskrit and Marathi classical works. In a few years he came back to Sholapur and surprised his brother by performing Kīrtans and Purāṇas in a charming manner. Having left the house in anger Rām returned home and showed what he was capable of. However, his predilection for tamāsās and his association with low people continued as before. But fortunately for Rām Jośi he met Moropant by chance. Moropant earnestly advised him to leave off his low degrading occupation and take to delivering Kīrtans to the public. Rām Jośi was impressed by the personality of Moropant. He had now passed his youth and was therefore disposed to hear the good advice of a great man. From that time he began to deliver Kīrtans enrapturing his audience by singing moral songs and pieces of his own composition as well as repeating the Āryās of Moropant. Just as the credit of revising Dnyāneśvar's work and spreading it in that form far and wide belongs to Eknāth, so the credit of popularising the Āryās of Moropant and of taking them into the nooks and corners of Mahārāṣṭra belongs to Rām Jośi. Rām Jośi showed by his genius that the *Lāvṇī* metre which was associated with vulgarity and low taste could be used for better purposes i. e. the entertainment and instruction of the public. He tried to improve the tone of the society about him by weaning them from the tamāsās. His efforts were destined to bear good fruit. For when he died in the year 1812 A. D.

the days of the Peśvāi rule and its vulgar taste were numbered and better days were in store for the people of Mahārāṣṭra. It is to the credit of Mahārāṣṭra that Rām Jośi tried his best to keep the purity and beauty of Marathi poetry amidst the vulgarising compositions of lower class poets that arose during the reign of Bājirāv II according to the well known saying, ' As the Ruler, so the subjects '.

#### ANANT PHANDĪ

The second poet of lesser calibre than Rām Jośi was Anant Phandī. He came from Sangamner in Ahmednagar district. He was born in the year 1744 A. D. He was a Yajurvedī Brahmin. His family were bankers by profession. But Anant Phandī did not take kindly to his hereditary profession. Like his contemporary Rām Jośi, Anant was a mischievous boy in early life. He took to low company and soon joined the then popular occupation of performing tamāsās. But he showed excellence in that art and became famous in that line. He had such an attractive delivery and such a wonderful power of composing appropriate Povādās, Lāvṇīs and especially songs in a new metre called Phatakā (whip) in which he excelled that the whole audience remained spell-bound throughout the opera. Of course these verses were calculated to please the low and vulgar taste of his vast audience. But his fascinating style once not only saved his life and property but brought him a reward from unexpected quarters. Anant Phandī while returning from Mālṡā to Sangamner was surrounded by Bhils who wanted to loot him. But using his presence of mind and conscious of the power of his lyre and his verse he composed extempore verses on the chief of the Bhils and sang them so finely that the chief and his followers were enraptured by them. So they not only returned his property which they had forcibly taken from him but gave him a gift in addition!

Such is the power of music! But like Rām Joṣī, Anant Phandī was destined to be weaned from his low occupation and apply his talent for the higher entertainment and instruction of the public. This was done by the famous Ahilyābāī, the Rānī of Indore. She once happened to meet and hear Anant Phandī. Being herself a pious lady she exhorted Anant Phandī to give up his low occupation and apply the God-given talent of composition to the good of the people. Anant Phandī was won over by her sweet words and thenceforward began to perform Kirtans in which he tried to impress upon men's minds the true spirit of devotion to God and the need of improving their character by leading a good life. Anant Phandī composed poems in the varied Marathi metres and used various subjects for his compositions. He also composed Kaṭāvs and Phaṭkās on contemporary events and incidents. He survived to witness the sad end of the rule of Bājirāv II but he also saw with satisfaction that the people wished to have a change of Government in Mahārāṣṭra. Anant Phandī died in the year 1821 A. D. at the age of 77.

#### PATRIOTIC NARRATIVE POETRY

Now we come to the historical section of the old Marathi literature, a unique thing in the Marathi language. This consists of two parts, one being in the usual metrical style and the other in the new prose style. The first section is known under the names of Povādās, historical Kaṭāvs and Lāvṇīs, metres introduced by the poets of the declining period of old Marathi literature. The other section consists of well-known Bakhars (chronicles) and public and private correspondence. Both these types of literature could only arise after the establishment of the Marāṭhā Empire which inspired the bards and poets called by the special name of Sāhirs to write and compose patriotic poems celebrating the stirring events and exploits which came about during the century of the rise and the fall of the Marāṭhā Empire. It is

to the lasting credit of these Śāhirs that they did not merely praise the exploits of old and contemporary heroes with exaggeration but were faithful in the narration of events, and just as they described in a happy mood and manner the success of their warriors they told in mournful numbers the misfortunes and failures of their heroes. These latter incidents led them to compose tragic songs which excited the sympathy of the audience for the heroes of the past.

Of course the Povādās and Lāvṇīs composed by the Śāhirs were written as poetry and had, therefore, all the characteristics of poetry. In fact, they were all narrative poems in which fact and fiction were artistically mingled so as to entertain and rouse the public. They constitute, therefore, a unique but fine type of poetry in Marathi language.

#### HISTORICAL LITERATURE

There were many famous names among these Śāhirs. Many of them rivalled the popularity of the older poets. Their name is legion and it is not possible to refer to any of them individually. A reference to some of them will be found in one of the later chapters of this history. Similar is the case with the Bakhars. They began to be written after the foundation of the Marāṭhā Kingdom by Śivāji and they continued with breaks to the beginning of the modern times. The last famous Bakharkār Malhār Rāmrao Cīṭnis who wrote more than one Bakhar lived about the year 1810 A. D. These Bakhars were all written for giving useful information about the history of the country to later generations. They were written in prose and there was no attempt at embellishment. They were mere recitals of events in simple language and they were not written with the scrupulousness with which the historical works in English literature are written. In fact, they only serve as valuable materials for future historians. But all the above Bakhars and ballads do come under literature in the wider sense of the term and thus form a part of the history of Marathi literature.

But this cannot be said of the public and private correspondence discovered in modern times. For these letters and dispatches were never intended as literature which would be read by future generations. They were written with the purpose of communicating news to the parties concerned. No thought was ever bestowed upon the language in which they were written. But now they have acquired the value of literature. For they reveal the thoughts, ideas and feelings of the people of those times. They show how the people spoke and communicated with each other. They indicate the manners and customs that obtained in the Marāthā society of the time. Now all these things are expected from literature. Thus though originally they served a different purpose these letters and dispatches have now acquired the character of true literature. A reference to them will be made in their appropriate place.

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## CHAPTER III

### DIVISION OF MARATHI LITERATURE INTO PERIODS

Broadly speaking Marathi literature made its appearance about the year 1000 A. D. in the heart of Mahārāṣṭra though the spoken language must have preceded it by one or two centuries. This tiny little stream of Marathi literature broadened, in time, into a mighty river in which the character and sentiments, ideas and ideals of the Marathi-speaking people were reflected. This implies that Marathi literature has a long history of about ten centuries similar to that of English literature. In this long history there was never any break, though, with lapse of time and under varying conditions, the original character and spirit gradually changed, and in place of the old types, new types of literature made their appearance. In order to understand properly and to describe in detail these changes it is necessary to divide the history into different ages and periods.

For the purposes of exposition it would be convenient to divide the history of Marathi literature into two broad ages, and then into periods, for detailed exposition.

The first age extends from the year 1000 A. D. to the year 1800 A. D. and may be called by the generic name 'the old or ancient age'. An age of 800 years appears too long, so it will have to be divided into periods. The second age extends from the year 1800 A. D. to the year 1938 A. D. Comparatively this is a short age of only 138 years and it may be styled 'the modern age'. But this apparently short age is in no way inferior either in quantity or quality of literary production to the old or ancient age, which is apparently, of very long duration.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD MARATHI POETRY

Let us now proceed to find out the distinguishing features of the old or ancient age and the modern age.

To begin with all old poets (old literature was almost all poetical) composed their poems and miscellaneous pieces in the metrical form which restricts the poet's choice of words and rhythm. But even in the field of poetry they knew only two forms of poetry, the devotional—a form peculiar to Marathi literature—and the narrative. They were altogether ignorant of the more interesting forms of literature like the drama, the novel, the short story and the essay—forms to be found in all developed literatures. Secondly, the old poets had a very low opinion of human life. They looked only to its dark side, scarcely recognising that God, by his grace, gave to mankind noble feelings and sentiments by means of which they could make their life joyous as well as useful. In short, the old poets took a very pessimistic view of life and in their poetry they taught people to retire from life or at least to curb their passions and sentiments. Thus all their poetry became gloomy and uninteresting. Thirdly, the old poets had absolutely no sense of humour in them and hence they deprecated laughter. Their poetry is always grave and serious. It is on account of the absence of playful disposition that old Marathi poets could not develop many interesting forms of literature like satire, parody, ironical and humorous poetry. Lastly, the old poets altogether neglected to make use of their inner and outer experience, i. e., experience of the mental and of the natural phenomena. Thereby they lost a great source of poetry. For it is a well-known fact that individuals differ in their temperaments and tastes. Each man's experience is often different from that of another. This variety in human experience leads naturally to varied types of poetry. For each poet gives expression to what he sees, feels and thinks. It is due to this neglect of personal experience that old Marathi poetry is wanting in descriptions of natural scenery, and depicting the inner mind



of man. There is also a kind of monotony and repetition in the old poetry. For, all poets depended for their subject matter and sources of information, upon the celebrated epics, the Mahābhārat and the Rāmāyaṇa and upon other Purāṇas and philosophical and semi-religious works. As all poets depended upon the same sources, they brought out poems dealing with the same themes, each poet using his favourite metre to tell his story. That is the reason why there is so much of repetition and sameness in the old poetry. The different poems appear to be versions of the same thread-bare stories. The old poets did not make use of the ever changing and ever expanding experience of man. They remained satisfied with worn out material.

#### NEW LEARNING

Now modern poetry gave up all these distinguishing features which were in reality the defects of old poetry. Modern writers had the great advantage that they came to know the varied and varying store of English literature rich in all forms. The great treasure of Sanskrit literature was also open to them. The old poets studied Sanskrit but they learnt only Purāṇas and semi-religious books and neglected the lighter and more interesting literature such as dramas, novels, story-books and the epic poems. But modern writers learnt with greater zeal and pleasure these literary works. Having such fine models before them and having learnt to use their individual experience, the modern writers began to produce poetry of a new type. So, modern poetry has developed distinguishing features diametrically opposed to those of old poetry. They can be gathered from the features of old poetry through the well-known principle that opposites imply each other.

Let us now turn to the causes which tended to produce modern Marathi literature.

In the first place the enlightened people of Western Europe, the British people, conquered within a century the

whole of India and brought it under a uniform system of laws and administration. With this enlightened rule came perfect security of life and property — a thing which the country did not enjoy for very many centuries. Rapid means of communication were established and thereby the barriers of great rivers, big mountains and vast deserts were removed and the whole country became united and people of one province could freely and easily visit another province and could come into contact with its people. In fact, the face of India altogether changed since the advent of the British rule in India.

More important causes than those mentioned above came into being slowly and gradually.

#### CONTACT WITH THE WEST

Western education, western culture, direct contact with a progressive civilization and acquaintance with and study of English and Sanskrit literature — all these combined to produce a revolution in society. New ideas, new experiences and a better and a brighter outlook on life were produced in the minds of men.

The last but not the least of these causes was the introduction of printing in India. This happened about 1800 A. D. This new invention produced a revolution in Europe. Its introduction into India produced a similar effect. Books could be rapidly and easily printed and thousands of copies could, in no time, be distributed throughout the length and breadth of the country.

All the above-mentioned causes combined to produce a ferment in men's minds. Such a ferment necessarily found expression in literature and thus the modern period in Marathi literature began from the year 1800 A. D.

#### PERIODS OF OLD LITERATURE

It now remains to point out the minor periods in the two major periods considered so far.

As stated before, the age of old Marathi literature consists of about 8 centuries. It naturally gets divided into three periods.

The first period begins with Cakradhar and Dnyāneśvar, the founders of the two contemporary religious sects — Mahānubhāva and Vārkarī and ends with Eknāth. This may be called the *early* period. The second period begins again with Eknāth. For he is a joining link between the two periods. It ends with Moropant. This may be called the *middle* period. But this period shows the highest water-mark of old Marathi literature. The third period begins with the imitators of Moropant and ends with the Śāhirs, though the muddy waters of the stream of literature pass on as an under current even into the great and growing modern age which begins from 1800 A. D. This period may be called the *declining* period of the old Marathi literature.

#### PERIODS OF MODERN LITERATURE

The modern age though consisting of only 138 years has to be divided into several periods. For, in this age, short though it is, almost all the forms of literature in verse and prose like drama, novel, short story and essay, and like history, biography and popular science came gradually into being. Moreover the volume of literature produced year by year assumed vast proportions. For purposes of exposition, therefore, it becomes necessary to form periods of very short duration. It is very difficult to designate these periods by significant names, on account of the varied literature produced in each, though I have made an attempt to assign names. The periods with their names are as follows :—

- |        |   |     |                        |   |
|--------|---|-----|------------------------|---|
| Period | I | ... | 1800 to 1818 A. D.     | External attempt.                       |
|        | „ | II  | ... 1818 to 1836 A. D. | Indigenous attempt.                     |
|        | „ | III | ... 1836 to 1856 A. D. | Translations.                           |
|        | „ | IV  | ... 1856 to 1866 A. D. | Status of Marathi in the<br>University. |

Period V	...	1866 to 1876 A. D.	The Romantic novel.
„ VI	...	1876 to 1896 A. D.	Makers of classic Marathi.
„ VII	...	1896 to 1912 A. D.	Great novelists.
„ VIII	...	1912 to 1918 A. D.	Literature for a variety of tastes.
„ IX	...	1918 to 1928 A. D.	Newer forms of literature.
„ X	...	1928 to 1938 A. D.	Recent phenomenal growth.

Conclusion — Future of Marathi literature.

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## CHAPTER IV

### 1800 TO 1818 A. D.: EXTERNAL ATTEMPT

The first period of modern Marathi literature just coincides with the tragic reign of the last unfortunate Peṣavā. Bājirāv II. As is well-known Bājirāv had to abdicate his throne in 1818 A. D. and had to spend the rest of his life at Brahmāvarta on the banks of the Ganges. The rule of the East India Company extended over Mahārāṣṭra and with it came the influence of the modern culture and civilization of the West which within a short time changed the face of the country.

It was remarked in the previous chapters that a perceptible decline in the old Marathi literature had begun about the end of the 18th century. This decline was, of course, due to the low taste and the love of vulgarity that the people of Mahārāṣṭra developed in those days. Naturally the writers composed poems and Povādās which the people liked and appreciated. This decline set in at the end of the middle period of Marathi literature and reached its climax in the reign of Bājirāv II. He encouraged obscene and vulgar literature because of his low and vitiated taste. His example was followed by the aristocracy and the gentry and thus the whole populace became rotten in literary taste.

### BEGINNING OF MODERN MARATHI

Under these conditions a new healthy literature had no chance to arise and grow. But although in the heart of Mahārāṣṭra a new literature could not make its appearance, still it is a fortunate thing that a beginning in the right direction was made in two places far distant from each other and quite away from Mahārāṣṭra. Further, it is a matter of pride that in one place i. e., Tanjore, a Marāṭhā Prince took up this matter in earnest and carried

it to a successful issue. The second attempt to develop new and healthy literature in Marathi was made at Serampore and at Calcutta by the celebrated missionary Dr. Carey. In the absence of any attempt of this kind in Mahārāṣṭra itself it is better to describe these external and outside efforts in the development of modern literature in Marathi.

#### THE RĀJĀ OF TANJORE

In 1787 Mahārājā Tulājirāv of Tanjore adopted as his son a Prince from the Bhosale family and named him Sarphoji Mahārāj. This young prince was given in charge of a missionary, Mr. Schwartz, for education. Sarphoji Mahārāj learnt English from Schwartz and it was through his influence that the young prince became fond of English literature and science. He came to the throne of Tanjore, after a good deal of difficulty about the validity of his adoption, in the year 1798. But Sarphoji Mahārāj was, through his innate idleness and neglect, found to be quite inefficient to administer his kingdom and he was prevailed upon to hand over the administration to the East India Company and to remain a titular Rājā in receipt of an annuity. Being free from the administrative cares and anxieties the Mahārājā devoted all his time, energy and money to establishing a fine library where he collected all manner of books in various languages and dealing with various sciences—new and old. This library is still to be seen at Tanjore. But from the point of view of modern Marathi literature the Mahārājā did a far more important thing. As stated before, he was fond of English literature and science. So he made up his mind to enrich Marathi literature by getting translations of English books done into Marathi and printing them in his capital. A book so printed was presented by a British gentleman to the British Museum and I was able to read that book while I was in England. As the first book printed in Marathi, the performance is creditable indeed! It is a translation of about 110 stories from Æsop's

Fables. It is the literary work of the Mahārājā's Prime Minister, Sakhaṇṇā Pandit, a Brahmin whose family emigrated to Tanjore in Śahājī's times. It is a finely illustrated book. At the end of each story after the usual moral written in Marathi prose, is added a Sanskrit verse giving briefly the moral of the story. More than the external appearance of the book its matter deserves to be admired. No doubt to modern ears the language reads crude and uncouth and sometimes even absurd. But it is to be remembered that this Marathi belongs to the year 1818 and comes from a province where very few individuals knew Marathi and even those were always surrounded by people speaking and writing non-Āryan languages. Instead of describing the contents of the book, I propose to quote in the appendix volume one story from the book (See Extract No. 1). For other information about the Mahārājā and his pioneering work in modern Marathi literature I give below a note written on the front page of the book. The note refers to the year 1817 and is probably written by the donor of the book to the British Museum.

#### PRINTING IN MARATHI

"The present Raja of Tanjore was a pupil of the celebrated missionary Schwartz. Having acquired a taste, in his youth, for European literature and science from his master, he determined, as soon as he succeeded to the sovereignty of his country, to introduce, amongst the Brahmins and higher castes of his people, a knowledge of European manufactures and a taste for European literature and science. He, therefore, with this view, procured a printing Press from England, established it in his own palace and had a great many of the Brahmins, who held appointments near his person, instructed in printing with Marathi and Sanskrit types. He also had many of them instructed in the art of manufacturing paper and held out the greatest encouragement to all persons filling high situations in his government who should become acquainted with the

English language and should make translations of English works of merit into the Marathi and the Sanskrit languages. This book No. I is a curiosity from its being the very first work translated and printed in the Raja's palace by his own servants; it was presented by the Raja himself to Sir Alexander Johnstone when Sir Alexander paid him a visit at Tanjore in the year 1817; it is a translation of *Aesop's Fables* made from English into Marathi language by the Prime Minister of the Raja who is himself a Mahratta of high rank, and the work was printed in the Raja's palace by his own printers who are all Brahmins; the woodcuts were made, the paper was manufactured and the book itself was bound in the palace. The woodcut at the commencement of the book is a representation of Ganesh, the Hindu God of wisdom, it being the custom of the Hindus to invoke the assistance of the God of wisdom at the commencement of each of their works."

The above note speaks volumes about the zeal of the Mahārājā of Tanjore for enriching the Marathi language with new literary works. The Mahārājā died in 1824 and with him disappeared his efforts in the cause of modern Marathi literature at Tanjore.

The above note read and extracted during my stay in England led me to visit Tanjore on my return home and I saw the curator of the Library and told him about the contents of the note. He told me that the news about the printing press and its establishment in the palace was utterly unknown to men in the palace. Even after a search he could not find out a copy of the book of *Aesop's Fables*. This means that after the death of the Mahārājā the press was probably destroyed by the orthodox men who were from the first opposed to his plan and no trace of the printing press remained at Tanjore. Only one Sanskrit book printed in the Tanjore Press was shown to me. Still the Tanjore Library contains a valuable collection of books both printed



and written by hand. It is visited by European scholars as seen from the visitors' book.

The second attempt at developing Marathi literature on modern lines is still more creditable and is worth describing in greater detail. Here the pioneering work was done at Serampore and Calcutta by the celebrated missionary Dr. Carey. His life is as interesting as his work.

#### DR. CAREY

William Carey was born in a midland county of England in 1761. He was a shoemaker. In his younger days he once told a lie which preyed upon his mind. By way of penance he began to study the Bible and for that purpose he learnt Greek, Latin and Hebrew. He had natural eloquence and naturally attracted the attention of missionaries. About this time the Baptist Missionary Society was formed and the plan of sending some missionaries to India was taken up. William Carey volunteered to go along with two other persons. Carey came to Calcutta in 1793. For maintaining himself by his own labour he secured employment on a tea-planter's estate and practised preaching in his leisure hours. While here, he studied Sanskrit, Bengali and Marathi and formed the ambitious project of translating the Bible into all the Indian Vernaculars and first began with Bengali and Marathi. But as the East India Company was opposed to Bible propaganda among their own subjects Carey had to shift to Serampore, then a Dutch possession. He brought a Printing Press from Europe and began the publishing of books in the Indian Vernaculars. But about this time i. e., 1802 a college was started in Calcutta with the object of giving the knowledge of the Indian languages to the servants of the Company. Dr. Carey was appointed the Professor of Sanskrit, Bengali and Marathi. He retired from the college in 1831 and died in India full of honours.

Dr. Carey's unique contribution to the developments of modern Marathi literature lies in his having supplied to that

language a grammar and a dictionary, besides publishing a few books.

### A MARATHI GRAMMAR AND DICTIONARY

It is a well recognised fact that without a grammar and a dictionary a language cannot become an efficient instrument of communication. For, in the absence of a dictionary and a grammar in a language, people are bound to make mistakes in the use of words and in the formation of sentences. This creates vagueness and confusion and leads to useless discussions. And controversies about trivial matters breed and grow. For there is nothing to refer to as a standard to settle points of dispute.

Such a need was not felt in the olden times. Marathi itself being the mother tongue of the people who wrote in that language, they did not much feel the need of a grammar or a dictionary. But the foreigners and especially the missionaries who came to India felt the great need of a grammar and a dictionary in learning easily and rapidly the Indian Vernaculars. Dr. Carey, when he became the Professor of Marathi, realized the need of his students and hence the first thing he did was to write a grammar of the Marathi language and to compile a dictionary of Marathi words.

Dr. Carey refers to a previous grammar of the Marathi language written by a Portuguese missionary but he could not get a copy of it and had to discover the principles and rules of Marathi grammar by his own observations and thought. This book consists of 9 sections covering in all, 152 pages. It is, of course, written in English and Marathi. In the appendix Dr. Carey has given stories and dialogues in Marathi so that his students might read them and translate them into English. I select one short story as a specimen of his Marathi literature (See Extract No. 2). It is to be remembered that this Marathi is the language spoken

and written by those very few persons who had migrated to Upper India. Dr. Carey was assisted in all his literary work in Marathi by a pandit named Vidyānāth. Dr. Carey's Marathi grammar was printed in the Mission Press, Serampore in 1805. Then he proceeded to compile a dictionary. It is a Marathi-English Dictionary of about 600 pages. Unlike the grammar which was published in the Devanāgarī script, the Dictionary was printed in the Moḍī Marathi alphabet, a very useful and rapid hand used for writing purposes. Dr. Carey had to prepare special types for these characters. He later on printed the translations of the Bible in the same Moḍī character. Dr. Carey published in all about 10 books in the Marathi language such as *Sinhāsanabattiśī*, a history of *Rājā Pratāpāditya*, and the geneology of *Raghojī Bhosale*. Of course, according to him his main work in Marathi was the translation of the several books of the Bible. This is really a huge work and indicates the zeal of the great missionary in making the tenets of the Christian religion available to the Marathi-speaking people. Of course the zeal of Dr. Carey was due to his eager desire to convert men to the Christian faith. Still what he did for the advancement of modern Marathi literature deserves admiration. An extract from the translation of the Bible is given as a specimen of missionary Marathi (See Extract No. 3).

But even more remarkable than the efforts of Dr. Carey is the wonderful work of another great missionary which must be recorded in this chapter. For it cannot find place anywhere else in this history. But it undoubtedly deserves to figure in the history of modern Marathi literature. Though chronologically that wonderful work belongs to the times of the old Marathi literature, it is really modern in spirit. For it gives expression, in flowing Marathi to ideas, experiences and ideals alien to Indian literature. In fact, it is one of the finest and most beautiful specimens of Marathi literature showing the richness, the power of lucid expression of thought, the sweetness and musical cadence of the

Marathi language. Moreover, the life and career of the great missionary is as interesting and curious as his work. For it is said that his enterprise led, though indirectly, to the formation of the East India Company and thereby to the introduction of western literature, culture and civilization in India. I refer to Father Thomas Stephens, the author of the *Khrista—Purāṇa*.

#### LIFE OF FATHER STEPHENS.

Thomas Stephens was born in 1549 in Wiltshire. After receiving his education at Winchester College he was converted to Catholicism. So he went to Rome and there got himself admitted to the Society of Jesus in 1575. After completing his apprenticeship he sailed for India from Lisbon in 1579. After reaching India he wrote a letter to his father, giving an account of his first impressions of India and its people and the prospect of trade with India. He was the first Englishman to come to India round the Cape of Good Hope. His letter induced the London merchants to form the East India Company. His father was a leading merchant in London. Thus he proved the unconscious forger of the link between India and England. Father Stephens, as he came to be called since his admission into the Society of Jesus, worked as a missionary of the Catholic faith on the Malabar Coast for full forty years. He learnt the Marathi language and its provincial dialect the *Koṅkaṇī*. He read and studied the classical authors like Mukundrāj, Dnyāneśvar and Nāmdev. He lived and moved among the people and so he was able to catch the spirit and the very idiom of the Marathi language. Eknāth was only one year senior to him. They seem to be contemporaries but they could never have known each other. Father Stephens was a foreigner who came to India to give the message of the Gospel to the Indian people. He learnt the Marathi language with a view to be able to preach in the language of the people. Though he did not succeed in converting people to his faith he left a fine legacy in the form of his

literary venture. Father Stephens died in 1619. During his life time the East India Company was formed, according to his desire.

#### THE KHRISTA-PURĀṆA.

Let me now turn to his great work. It was called by him Khrista-Purāṇa. It is a big poem composed in Marathi giving the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the tenets and doctrines of the Roman Catholic religion. The poem is remarkable as regards its diction and its doctrines. In the preface Father Stephens in many a striking simile points out the excellence of the Marathi language, the richness of its vocabulary and its power of expression. Father Stephens was enamoured of the Marathi language. His love towards the people and their language is simply wonderful. It is not possible to give a correct idea of Father Stephen's Khrista-Purāṇa. It is undoubtedly a masterpiece of the Marathi language written by a foreign missionary. An estimate of the style and poetic power of Father Stephens can be formed from the extracts (See Extracts No. 4-5). The Purāṇa was first printed in 1616 then in 1649, again in 1654 and was reprinted in 1907. The Masrsen Library at the School of Oriental studies, London, possesses a copy of this work in the Devanāgarī script.

I have given here some information about the fine poetical work of Father Stephens because of its new and modern spirit, though it did not chronologically belong to this period. This period may be concluded with some reference to the popular poetry of Bājirāv II's reign though it is low and vulgar and belonged to the declining period of old Marathi literature. The bulk of this poetry was actually produced in the first period of the history of modern Marathi literature. The best of it shows that in the old muddy stream of literature there were germs and tendencies of modern times. For in spite of the misrule of Bājirāv II the new influences were spreading throughout the land and in-

evitably changing the people's outlook on life. Among the innumerable writers, bards and Śāhirs who were pandering to the low taste of the people, Rām Jośī and Honājī Bāl were honourable exceptions and their poetry gives expression to ennobling sentiments which will appeal even to men of modern culture. Their works show what Marathi poetry was capable of under able hands (See Extracts Nos. 6 and 7).

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## CHAPTER V

### 1818 TO 1836 : INDIGENOUS ATTEMPT

The second period of the history of modern Marathi literature just covers about two decades of the 19th century. This century drops the curtain on the degenerate rule of Bājirāv II, signifying the conclusion of the ten act tragedy of the Marāṭhā Empire.

This second period is thus coeval with the advent of the British rule in Mahārāṣṭra under Elphinstone the able and sympathetic Governor of Bombay. Though he was instrumental in ending the rule of Bājirāv II by securing his abdication of the throne and his retirement to Brahmāvarta, far away from Mahārāṣṭra, he had great respect for the character and system of administration of the Marāṭhā people and especially for the Marathi language and literature. So during his regime he did his best to encourage and develop Marathi literature by state patronage and personal influence. That Elphinstone did his best to stimulate modern Marathi literature during his regime is evident from the educational policy which he actually pursued, from his advocacy, before the Board of Directors in England, for the continuance of the same policy after him, and lastly from the actual measures he adopted for the development of modern Marathi literature. For explaining his policy to the people of Mahārāṣṭra as also to the Board of Directors, Elphinstone wrote his famous Educational Dispatch in which he declared his policy and aim in the following remarkable terms :—

#### ELPHINSTONE'S PROPOSALS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AMONG THE PEOPLE.

- (1) "Improvement in the indigenous system of education and increase of such schools.
- (2) Preparation of school books.

- (3) Encouragement to learners from lower classes.
- (4) Provision for teaching European sciences and literature of a high order.
- (5) Publication of scientific books on Ethics and Physics *in the Vernaculars*.
- (6) Teaching of English as *opening up the doors of western science and literature*.
- (7) Encouragement of natives to take to this education."

The above quotation shows distinctly that Elphinstone had a double object in formulating his educational policy i. e. to spread western science and literature among the people of Mahārāṣṭra not through the medium of the English language but through that of the mother tongue of the people and, secondly, to enrich and develop the Marathi literature both by translations and by original works in Marathi.

In pressing his policy upon the attention of the Board of Directors in England, Elphinstone appealed to them in the following terms towards the close of his famous dispatch.

"I can conceive no objection that can be urged to these proposals except the greatness of expenses to which I would oppose the magnitude of the object. It is difficult to imagine an undertaking in which our duty, our interest and our honour are more immediately concerned. It is now well-understood that in all countries the happiness of the poor depends, in a great measure, on the education. It is by means of it alone that they can acquire those habits of prudence and self-respect from which all other good qualities spring; and if ever there was a country where such habits are required it is this."

#### ELPHINSTONE'S FORESIGHT.

In such appealing terms Elphinstone begged of the Board of Directors that his liberal educational policy of



encouraging the spread of western science and literature *through the medium of the Marathi language*, among the Marāṭhā people, should be continued after him and that the funds required to carry out that policy should be set apart from the revenues of the Province. That this interest expressed in his dispatch is not superficial but that he really had at heart, the education and uplift of the Marāṭhā people over whom he had to rule, is proved by an actual incident related in his biography. Soon after Elphinstone became Governor of the Bombay Presidency, a distinguished guest came to pay a visit to him at his residence. He saw Elphinstone surrounded by books having book-marks and pencil marks in them and asked him in surprise what he was engaged in doing. Elphinstone replied, "I am preparing to return home, bag and baggage." The visitor did not understand Elphinstone's enigmatical reply and he exclaimed in a greater surprise what he meant by that. Elphinstone explained to him the exact implication of his reply. He told the stranger that he was then engaged in getting classical English books translated into the Marathi language so as to impart to the people of Mahārāṣṭra the teachings of western culture and literature. By reading them the people would be imbued with western ideas and ideals of life and would long for self-government. The British people would then be obliged to give back the government of the country to the people themselves and so they would have to return to their island home. The stranger was struck with the noble sentiments expressed by Elphinstone admired him and his administration of the Province and took leave of the enlightened ruler of the Bombay Presidency.

#### MEASURES FOR ENCOURAGEMENT OF MARATHI.

Having given a sufficient account of Elphinstone's enlightened policy of public education and of the development of Marathi literature let me now turn to the measures that he adopted in pursuance of his purpose and

to the actual results of these measures in the form of the Marathi literature produced during his regime.

Immediately after taking the reins of his high office Elphinstone sanctioned the establishment of a society for the promotion of the education of the poor and it was started in 1820. Adhering to the constitution first framed for the Society it worked for full six years, and conducted all education through the medium of Marathi. Secondly, a sum of Rs. 50,000 was sanctioned annually for publication of books in Marathi. Thirdly, out of the Dakṣiṇā fund which used to be spent annually in making gifts in cash to learned Brahmins in the reign of Bājirāv II, Elphinstone, according to his agreement with the last Peśvā, spent only a part in gifts as of old, but devoted most of the amount to the establishment and maintenance of a Pathaśālā where, along with the old Sanskrit literature, the modern sciences with English as the second language were taught. All this instruction was carried on through the medium of the Marathi language.

#### A DICTIONARY AND A GRAMMAR.

Besides these official measures, many a private institution was started to spread the knowledge of western culture and literature among the people. Thus came into existence societies like the Vidyottejak Sabhā (1815), the Vidyāvṛddhi Sabhā (1820), the Native school book and School Society (1822). Missionary societies also began the work of education and of the publication of books in Marathi, though their official object was proselytization. But indirectly they studied Marathi language and literature and taught them in their schools. All these measures, official and non-official, gave a wonderful stimulus to the spread of education and through it to the development of modern Marathi literature. The actual output in the form of books was meagre. But the modern Marathi language was being moulded to do the new work. During this period the two essential aids to the scientific study of Marathi

i. e. a Marathi dictionary and a Marathi grammar were supplied. The first was the joint production of Sanskrit pandits who had taken to the new learning, such as Paraśurām Tātyā Godbole and others. This great dictionary was lithographed and was published in six volumes in the year 1829. This dictionary brought for the first time clearness and preciseness in the meaning of Marathi words, indigenous or adopted from foreign languages. The second work in a different but kindred line was the publication of a Marathi grammar by Dādobā Pāṇḍuraṅg Tarkhaḍkar. It was not published in this period nor does the literary work of the author fall in this period. But as an important aid to the development of modern Marathi literature it did a service similar to the one done by the first Pandit Marathi dictionary and hence along with it the grammar is referred to here. A fuller reference to the grammar and its author will be made in its proper place.

Now to come to the actual literary output between 1818 and 1836. In this work both Indians and Englishmen co-operated and contributed to the development of modern Marathi. There are also a few anonymous writers. In these early periods we find that writers were rather unwilling to publish books under their own names, for they feared about the reception which their literary ventures would meet at the hands of the educated people. But all told the writers do not number even 20.

#### FIRST PROSE WRITER.

The foremost among them are two prose writers, Sadāśiv Kāśināth Chatre and Bāl Gaṅgādhara Śāstrī Jāmbhekar.

Sadāśiv Kāśināth *alias* Bāpūsāheb Chatre was born at Nagaon, District Kolaba in 1788. He came of a middle class family of Brahmins and had the ordinary gentleman's education which consisted of the three R's and a little bit of Sanskrit. He came to Bombay in 1808 to seek his

fortune and learnt from a missionary the English language probably upto the 5th or the 6th standard; for, though the East India Company's rule had not actually begun in Bombay, shrewd people had come to see that Bājirāv's rule was doomed and that very soon the British rule would take the place of Marāṭhā rule in Mahārāṣṭra. So these people were anxious to learn the language of the would-be rulers of Mahārāṣṭra. Even his meagre knowledge of the English language and literature served Bāpūsāheb Chatre very well. As soon as Elphinstone took up the reins of Government into his hands he wanted an English-knowing Indian gentleman of a respectable family to supervise the work of Vernacular schools. Bāpūsāheb was strongly recommended by the missionary who had taught him English and so he was appointed an inspector of schools. Bāpūsāheb Chatre turned out an ideal Inspector. He not only did the actual work of inspection efficiently and with zeal but moved among the people and persuaded them to send their boys to the new schools established by the new rulers. He personally helped the brighter but poorer students. Two out of the many he helped became famous, viz. Bāl Gaṅgādhār Śāstri Jāmbhekar and Bhāu Mahājan. Bāpūsāheb died in 1830 A. D.

Chatre has the great honour of being the first maker of modern Marathi literature. His first books were translations from the famous Sanskrit books, *Vetālpāñcaviṣī* and *Śukabāhāttarī*. They were quite good and were liked by the people. But his masterpieces were translations from the *Children's Friend* and *Aesop's Fables*.

Both these books are written in simple style and read exactly like original books in the Marathi language. The following extracts will prove both the points as regards the style and the thoughts of the author (See Extracts 8 and 9).

#### LIFE OF JĀMBHEKAR.

The favourite pupil of Bāpūsāheb Chatre, as stated before, was Bāl Gaṅgādhār Śāstri Jāmbhekar. He came from

a priestly Brahmin family. He was born in a village near Rājāpur in the Ratnagiri District in 1810. He was a precocious child and had a keen and penetrating intellect. For his wonderful memory he was called Bṛhaspati, the lord of the intellect. As soon as he finished his education in 1828, he was taken up in the newly formed educational service of the government and he at once turned out to be a born teacher. Later on he was made a professor of Mathematics and Astronomy in the Elphinstone Institution, started after Elphinstone's retirement from the Governorship of the Bombay Presidency. Bāl Śāstrī, as he was popularly known, was an adept in both ancient lore of India, particularly in Indian Astronomy and also in European sciences and English literature. Besides knowing English, Latin and Sanskrit he had learnt the Persian and Kannada languages. He was noted for his able teaching of Mathematics and Astronomy. In fact, he was a precursor of the more famous mathematician and astronomer, Kerū Nānā Chatre, closely related to Bāpūsāheb Chatre. Bāl Śāstrī died in harness in 1846 in Bombay, while engaged in some astronomical research. For his advanced social views he was persecuted by his caste but he remained true to the new cause.

#### SCIENCE IN MARATHI.

Bāl Gaṅgādhār Śāstrī had a versatile genius and so his work in the development of modern Marathi literature is varied. He wrote two very fine books on Indian History. The first was an adaptation of Elphinstone's History of India. The second was an independent history of British rule in India (See Extracts Nos. 10 and 11). His style was simple, lucid and copious. Besides these historical works he wrote a simple grammar for boys and a book on Geography and Mathematical Astronomy. He is credited with the idea of starting an Anglo-vernacular newspaper and a Marathi magazine with the help and collaboration of another versatile writer, Bhāu Mahājan. He actually started both the literary ventures, but

they became short-lived. Nevertheless, the ideas took root in the minds of the people and in later periods newspapers and magazines became a regular feature of the Marathi language and contributed a good deal to the modern development of Marathi literature.

#### BEGINNING OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

His collaborator was Govind Viṭṭhal Mahājan *alias* Bhāū Mahājan. He was born at Peṇ, Kolaba District in 1815. He was the second pupil of Bāpūsāheb Chatre referred to before. Like Bāl Śāstrī he knew many languages. As stated before, Bhāū Mahājan, in carrying out the idea of Bāl Śāstrī, became successively the editor of the Darpaṇa, Digdarśana, Prabhākar, Dhūmaketū, Dnyānadarśana (a quarterly), and Upadeśacandrikā. He had a passion for current controversies and he carried them on through the columns of his papers throughout his younger days. For though he lived to a green old age and died at the age of 75, he spent the latter part of his life in comparative leisure and ease in Nagpur with his son who occupied a high position in government service there. The two extracts from his numerous articles (See Nos. 12 and 13) will give an idea of his journalistic genius and his skill in the war of words. He had formed the ambitious plan of translating Bacon's *Novum Organum* into Marathi. But he was too proud to remain in the leading—strings of Major Candy, the Government translator and censor of Marathi publications undertaken under Government patronage.

#### MOLESWORTH'S DICTIONARY.

Now we come to the life-work of two Englishmen who did valuable service in the cause of the development of Marathi literature, viz. Molesworth and Major Candy. Molesworth's Marathi-English dictionary was the joint work of many hands, both British and Indian though the directing hand was Molesworth's. It was published in 1831 as

the result of six years' labours. Molesworth says in the preface to his great dictionary :—"It is the product of unremitted labour through six years. It was undertaken not from a thirst after honour or emolument but from a humble desire of promoting the propagation of the glorious Gospel; and it was continued by the energy of this desire through sickness and weakness and against troubles and difficulties and grievous discouragements. The Lord has brought it to completion. To the Lord be thanksgiving and praise." This quotation indicates how Englishmen worked in a religious spirit though they were actually engaged in civil administration under the British rule in India which was carried on in a purely secular spirit. As stated before, the Candy brothers and many Indian scholars helped Molesworth in bringing out his great work.

#### MAJOR CANDY.

Among the Englishmen who helped directly or indirectly in the progress of modern Marathi literature Major Candy stands foremost. Candy came to India in 1822 and joined the army. But having a literary bent he soon changed his military career and became an educational officer in the Bombay Presidency. He first became the Superintendent of the Poona Pāṭhaśālā and then the Principal of the Poona College which soon after came to be called the Deccan College. Then he became the chief Marathi Translator to Government. He continued in that high and important office till his retirement in 1876. He died in 1877 at the ripe old age of 72.

As already stated he helped Molesworth in the preparation of his great Marathi-English dictionary. But subsequently he himself compiled an independent Marathi-English dictionary and then later on an English-Marathi dictionary also. He translated some books and published them in the Government series of Marathi books. But his greatest contribution to the spread and development of Marathi literature, both old and modern was the preparation of seven text books for the educational department. No doubt here too

he took the invaluable help of many Marathi scholars and writers, particularly of Paraśurāmpant Tātyā Goḍbole, the greatest living authority on old Marathi poets and himself a maker of modern Marathi literature. As a poetical text book for all Marathi standards and as a companion book to the series of text books edited by Candy, Paraśurāmpant Tātyā compiled a selection from all the old poets upto the beginning of the 19th century and called his book 'Navanita' (butter): the true significance of the title is better brought out by the English word 'cream'.

#### MARATHI SCHOOL TEXTS.

These famous books remained the standard books for imparting education in Marathi for about 50 years. Major Candy had to do a lot of spade work. He first settled the exact spelling and pronunciation of Marathi words. Then he settled the grammatical and syntactical structure of sentences in Marathi. For this purpose he adopted Dādobā Pāṇḍuraṅg's Marathi grammar as the standard of the correct writing and pronunciation of the Marathi language. Before him there was practically a chaos in both these respects. His books, together with the Navanita of Paraśurāmpant and the grammar of Dādobā were the only books recognised by the Educational Department of the Government, they were carefully studied by all the students attending the Government or private (indigenous) or missionary schools. Such a study by generations of students led to precision in expression, clarity of thought and sweetness of diction among the writers and authors who were brought up under this system of education.

#### SCIENCE THROUGH MARATHI.

Captain George Jarvis was another Englishman who did yeoman's service to the cause of the spread of western science and literature among the people through the publication of scientific and literary books in Marathi. These books were either translations or adaptations from classical English books on the several subjects. He was appointed



Secretary of the Printing and Publishing Branch of the Educational Department. He was assisted in his work by Jagannāth Śāstri Kramavant. The first book printed and published by Captain Jarvis was a translation of 'Practical Geometry' by L. C. Pasley, of the Royal Engineers. (By the bye, Jarvis was himself a Bombay Engineer). This book was dedicated to Elphinstone and was published in 1826. In the preface to this translation Captain Jarvis indicates the aims and purposes of the promoters of western education in the Bombay Presidency. They intended to give instruction through the vernacular and gradually to get scientific books translated into the vernacular itself. How and why this policy was changed will be explained later on.

The second translation published by Jarvis was a book named, 'Vidyece Uddes, Lābh āṇi Santos'. It was an adaptation from the 'Library of Useful Knowledge'. This book, published in 1829, was dedicated to His Highness Chatrapati Pratāpsing Mahārāj of Satara—the first patron of Marathi literature from the princely class. A quotation from the preoration shows the style of the book. No doubt the writing of prose in Marathi was still in its infancy and the writers found difficulty in expressing new ideas in Marathi. (See Extract 14.)

Jarvis published in all about 10 books—either translations or adaptations—on varied subjects during his seven years' secretaryship of the Printing and Publishing Department. His works went into undeserved oblivion as after 1836 a change came over the educational policy of the Bombay Government.

There were a few more English writers as there were Indian writers in this period. But as their works are long forgotten and each writer wrote only one book of hardly any importance we need not refer to them individually. Such writers are like foundation stones, hidden from view, though serving their purpose of supporting the great super-structure.

## CHAPTER VI

### 1836 TO 1856: TRANSLATIONS.

The third period of our History covers two full decades. It begins with the inauguration of the policy advocated in the famous educational minute of Macaulay. This famous minute put an end to the controversy between the orientalist and the occidentalists among the European scholars of the time. This controversy first began in Bengal but very soon it came into prominence even in the Bombay Presidency, especially after the retirement of Elphinstone who followed the policy of the golden mean and avoided the controversy begun in Bengal. In this controversy Macaulay as a Law Member of the Government of India took the side of the occidentalists and in defence of that policy he wrote his famous educational minute in 1833. Macaulay had a very low opinion of the Indian literature and culture. In his condemnation he did not spare even the Persian literature.

### ORIENTALIST VS. OCCIDENTALIST.

The view of the orientalist was that the East India Company should not encourage Western education among the Indians. For it would give them the democratic ideas of independence, freedom and self-rule, but such ideas are detrimental to the permanence of British rule in India. So they wanted that for the satisfaction of the craving for learning and science among the Indian people the Company should teach them the effete science and literature of the East contained in the works written in the Sanskrit and Persian languages. This was, in their opinion, the safest policy to pursue. As against this selfish view, Macaulay advocated the liberal policy of teaching western science and literature to the Indian people, but, through the medium of the English language. Macaulay had

a double object in advocating this policy of teaching English to the Indian people. In the first place, he wanted to create a class among the Indians, which was imbued with the ideas of Western culture and was especially conversant with the civilised system of administration with its division into various departments which was being rapidly introduced into the country. To carry on the administration of the vast country, a numerous body of efficient servants was required. It was not possible to bring from England such a body of servants. So Macaulay proposed by his scheme to create from among the people a servant class which was trained by English education from the very beginning. This was the first object of Macaulay in introducing European science and literature through the medium of the English language among the people. The second object was to remove the rank ignorance and superstition from the minds of the people. He knew, however, that the introduction of Western science and literature would necessarily create in the minds of the people a love for democratic institutions and a spirit of patriotism, the special features of western civilization, that the Indians would demand such institutions and that the British people would be obliged in course of time to hand over the reins of government to the Indian people. But Macaulay, in words similar to those uttered by Elphinstone, boldly declared that such a day would be a glorious day in the annals of Britain.

The immediate effect of the introduction of Macaulay's scheme of education, in which vernacular literature was severely excluded, was detrimental to the growth of Marathi literature which had received encouragement till then.

#### STIMULUS TO ENGLISH EDUCATION.

The change advocated by Macaulay in his famous educational minute of 1833 was actually brought into force by about 1836. As a result, English schools, both private and public, came to be established all over the Presidency

and they contributed to the spread of western literature and science among the middle class people. The educated men were easily absorbed in the various departments of Government. As they came to be well placed in society, and as they had time and talent, some of them gave part of their leisure to the work of writing books in Marathi. They brought out either adaptations, or translations, or abridgments of literary and scientific works from the English language into Marathi. It is curious to see that in this period there are very few translations from Sanskrit works. This is due to the fact that in the secondary and the higher education English literature was a compulsory subject and as yet Sanskrit was rarely taught in schools and colleges. Only in 1866 was Sanskrit introduced as a compulsory subject throughout the University course.

During this third period there are about 20 writers who tried to contribute, more or less, to the development of modern Marathi literature by their works. Let us now give the available account of them and their works.

#### RĀMCANDRA AMṚT DUGAL.

Rāmcandra Amṛt Dugal *alias* Joshi was a Kokaṇastha Brahmin hailing from Wāyanganī, district Ratnagiri. Rāmcandra and his brother lost their parents while they were mere boys. So they came to Poona. There, both of them managed to learn English, then a sure qualification for getting service in the new Government of Bombay. Rāmcandra studied upto the fifth English standard. He had a liking for painting. But his genius remained dormant. For, he soon got a post in the revenue department of the Bombay Government. Being an efficient and capable man he soon rose in service and finally became a Hujur Deputy Collector. He was posted at Nasik from where he retired after the completion of his Service. There he bought a house and spent the days of his long retirement. Rāmcandra had a fine physique and had specially developed it by gymnastic

exercises. On the subject of gymnasium and wrestling he is said to have written a pictorial book pointing the proper positions of the body in the different gymnastic exercises and particularly those on Malkhāmb (smooth circular wooden tapering pillar). Probably because Rāmcandrarāv was regular in taking physical exercise, he lived to a fairly old age and died about 1872.

He wrote a fine book in the dialogue form on agricultural topics in 1838. It is a small book of about 60 pages. It is written in the form of dialogues between a father and a son. By way of introduction, an account is given of how the father became a government servant and how after a sufficient acquaintance with English literature and science he developed a taste for agriculture. (This is possibly an autobiographic account.) The dialogues are written in a fine, simple and easy style. Whether the work is original or an adaptation is not clear. But, whatever it is, it reads like an original composition. The specimen in Extract 15 will speak for itself.

#### HARĪ KEŚAVAJĪ PĀTHĀRE.

Harī Keśavajī Pāthāre (1804-1858) was a great translator of this period. Probably no one has surpassed him in this branch of modern Marathi literature. Moreover, he was a versatile writer. He has written, on literary as well as on scientific subjects, a large number of very big books.

Harī Keśavajī belonged to the Pāthāre community whose home is Bombay and its suburbs. Harī Keśavajī was born in Bombay in 1804. He was educated in the then famous Robert Money School. After the completion of his higher education he took to government service and rose to the highest position in it. In 1831 he was made a member of the Education Society which position he retained till 1851. He became the Chief Translator to the High Court of Bombay, a post of great honour and trust.

He wrote about 10 books great and small, in Marathi, all of them being either translations or adaptations. His principal and important work seems to be on Natural Science and Chemistry. With the help of Viśvanāth Nārāyaṇ Maṇḍalik he wrote a book on Economics. It was written in his old age and it seems he took the help of a younger man. He adapted from an English school text book, popular at that time, a history of England in the letter form. This is a fine literary work and deserves to be reprinted and used as a rapid reader in Marathi schools. It is simple, easy and interesting. He also translated Bunyan's "Pilgrims' Progress". (See Extracts 16 and 17.) The following is a list of his published books.

1. Siddhapadārtha Vidnyāna (Natural Philosophy)  
Śāstra.
2. Rasāyana Śāstra. (Chemistry)
3. Inḡlandacā Vṛttānta. (History of England)
4. Nitigrantha. (On Morals)
5. Yātrik Kramaṇa. (Pilgrims' Progress)
6. Deśavyavahāra-vyavasthā. (Economics)
7. Śāstrīya Dnyānadarśana. (General Science)

He was a member of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society to the end of his life.

#### NĀNĀ MOROJĪ TRILOKEKAR.

The next writer also comes from the Pāthāre community of Bombay. He was not a prolific writer at all. Like Dugal he wrote only one work. But it was a good addition to the Marathi literature. Nānā Morojī Trilokekar was born in 1822 in Bombay. He was educated in the Elphinstone High School, that was started to perpetuate the memory of the first Governor of Bombay. He seems to have served in several departments of the government, showing his versatility. But ultimately he took to the magisterial line and became a Presidency Magistrate—the highest post in that line. While he was in school he heard that Sir William Jones knew

many languages and the young Nānā formed the ambition of becoming a linguist like Sir William Jones. He became well versed in several languages, viz., English, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Gujarati, and Marathi. He was known for his impartiality and strict administration of law.

His only work is named Vidyopakramācā Grantha. This seems to have been compiled with the help of his brother and was published in 1848. This book is modelled on "Macullock's Course of Elementary Reading", but is not a mere translation. It deals with a variety of subjects—moral, historical and scientific. The preface contains a remark indicating the faith of the people of the time. "If the great body of the people are ever to be enlightened it must be through their own languages". This book is written in a very simple style. There are very few Sanskrit words and the sentences are short. The quotation (See Extract 18) will be a very good specimen of the style of the writer.

After his retirement he was personally called by His Highness Tukojirāv Holkar of Indore and he was made the Diwān of Indore. While he was in that position two important cases from the Jahāgirdārs of the State came before him in which he had to give decisions against His Highness. Nānā Morojī had the courage to do the right thing even against his own master. Such was his disinterested love of truth and justice.

#### MINOR AUTHORS.

Now we may refer to three little known authors whose works, though translations from old Sanskrit books seem to have been extremely popular among the people of that period. Of the three authors the first in order appears to be Rāvajī Bhāskar Rānaḍe. He translated into Marathi the most popular work in Sanskrit named "Vṛddha cāṇakya". The second author's name is not known but it seems probable judging from the style, that he is identical with the author

of Vṛddha cāṇakya. His work is a translation of the well known Sanskrit work 'Vidura nīti'. Both the books consist of the political and practical philosophy believed in by the ancient Āryan people. They were probably written in comparatively recent times as they refer to Mohammedan and other foreign invaders. But the works contain wise and practical advice to common people. Many a verse in both the books was used by the people of the time in their conversation as proverbs. Hence the importance of these translations. (See Extracts Nos 19 and 20.) The third work is a prose translation into Marathi of the world famous Bhagavadgītā. This translation was made by Rāmcandra Śāstrī Moḍak and was named Bhāvacandrikā. It was printed in 1851. Its importance lies in the fact that it is probably the first prose Marathi translation of the famous religious book.

Another less known writer is Govindśāstrī Gaṅgādhara Śāstrī Phadke. He was the author of a translation of the Principles of Mechanics. He wrote an independent book on the immortality of the soul, and also a work on the essence of Hinduism and lastly a small grammar of the Marathi language.

#### RAMCANDRARĀV.

Now we come to Ramcandrarāv, a writer not from the Marathi-speaking country but from a far distant province i.e., Southern India. He wrote an independent book about the fall of Tipū Sultān—the Tiger of Mysore. He was also a bit of a poet and a collection of his poems was published. As a specimen of Marathi outside Mahārāṣṭra the following Extracts from Rāmcandrarāv's works will be interesting. (See Extracts 21 and 22.)

Another writer to whom a reference is needed is Harī Raghunāth Gādgīl. He wrote a brief survey of the history of the world in two parts. This was a unique work as it purported to give an outline of the history of the world an ambitious



task. He also wrote an account of the Vinčūrkar family—a celebrated warrior family of Nasik. Another work, the joint product of the labours of Dharma Nārāyaṇji Paṇḍit and Rām-candra Harī Bākre, is named the 'Story of Nandarāja.' This is a short story written in a fine, flowing style. The following specimen from the work will speak for itself. (See Extract 23.) We must now refer to another writer who was the translator of the first romantic novel from Persian into Marathi. His book is probably the first novel in Marathi literature. A specimen will show the kind of translation that the author was able to make. (See Extract 24).

#### KERŪNĀNĀ CHATRE.

An educationist, a mathematician, an astronomer, a meteorologist, a man of simple living and high thinking and lastly, an eminent product of the union of the culture of the west with that of the east: such was Kero Lakṣmaṇ Chatre. He was highly respected by his generation as well as by all subsequent generations of the educated people of Mahārāṣṭra.

Kero Lakṣmaṇ Chatre was born at Nāgaon, District Kolaba, in 1824. He was a nephew of Sādāśiv Kāśināth Chatre, the first maker of Marathi literature. On account of the premature death of his father, Kero Lakṣmaṇ was brought up by his uncle. He was educated at the Elphinstone Institute. Knowing his superior knowledge of Mathematics and Astronomy, Government took Kero Lakṣmaṇ into State service in their meteorological observatory located at Colaba. But he was soon transferred to the Educational Department. Here he earned a great reputation as an eminent teacher of Mathematics and Astronomy. He rose to be a Professor in the Elphinstone College. He was the first Indian to occupy the position of a professor in a college where there was a predominance of English professors. Later on he was transferred to the Deccan College when it came to be housed in its permanent home on the Khandobācā.

Māl situated five miles from the Poona City. He was a resident Professor there and was very popular among his pupils. He retired from service and made his permanent residence in Poona. He died in 1884 at the age of 60.

#### PROBLEM OF SCIENTIFIC TERMINOLOGY

As his time was taken up in teaching such difficult subjects as Mathematics and Astronomy he did not find sufficient leisure to write books in Marathi on his favourite subjects. He must have felt the difficulty of technical terms. However, he knew Sanskrit Astronomy and that must have partially removed the difficulty of expressing new ideas in Marathi. In spite of these initial difficulties, Professor Chatre wrote in Marathi a number of papers and articles on his favourite subjects. Some of his original papers were published in English. His Marathi books are the following :—

1. The Ebb and Tide and other astronomical topics.
2. Atmosphere and its changes.
3. Natural science.
4. Exposure of superstitions.

But the most important work of Keropant was the reform of the Hindu Calender. He made new observations of his own and tallying them with the results of the observations made in the West he tried to remove the errors and mistakes in the old Hindu calender and suggested the needed reforms in it. But the extreme orthodoxy of the people came in the way of the adoption of Chatre's reformed calender. Still those people and families who were convinced of the need of reform in the observance of religious ceremonies adopted the new calender and even now some of them perform religious functions according to the calender known as Chatre's.

An original suggestion of Professor Chatre is worth mentioning here. He was the first Indian Astronomer

to discover that there was some connection between the appearance of sun-spots and years of scarcity and famine. It is unfortunate that Keropant did not live to pursue his discovery. But later observations seem to confirm his suggestion. (See Extract 25.)

Now I have to refer to a noted author of a class which became famous in the subsequent period. I mean a class of persons who were originally Sanskrit Śāstrīs, who afterwards learnt English and became imbued with the spirit of Western culture and literature and who used their double acquaintance with Eastern and Western literature in enriching Marathi literature by their varied writings—scientific, literary and poetic.

The first of this class was Mahādev Govindśāstrī Kolatkar. Mahadev Govindśāstrī Kolatkar comes from a Kokaṇastha family which has produced in modern times two great Marathi writers i.e. Messrs. Śrīpād Kṛṣṇa Kolatkar and Acyut Balavant Kolatkar. Mahadev was born in 1811. He first learnt Sanskrit and then took to English education. After completing it he took up service in the Education Department of the Bombay Government. He rose to be an Inspector of Schools. He was a renowned orator of his time. The eye witnesses have said that the audience was spell-bound by his fluency, fine voice and mastery over both English and Marathi languages. But Mahadevśāstrī did not live long to give the benefit of his knowledge to his country-men. His masterpiece in Marathi language is the literal translation of Shakespeare's Othello. He died in 1862 at the age of 44.

He wrote about five books two of which were selections from English poems rendered into Marathi verse. The other three belonged respectively to history, science and drama. The first was an adaptation of an English book about Columbus and his wonderful discovery of the New World. The second was on Natural Philosophy and Science.

The third was a translation of Shakespeare's Othello. All these books are characterised by lucidity and felicity in expressing into Marathi the new ideas to be found in those books.

#### SHAKESPEARE IN MARATHI.

Mahādevsāstrī may be said to be a pioneer in introducing the dramas of Shakespeare to the Marathi-speaking people. In the subsequent period we find a number of writers who followed the example of Mahādevsāstrī and translated or adapted Shakespeare's dramas. Later on these plays began to be staged and as the audience was more pleased with the familiar Marathi names of heroes and heroines in Marathi garb, the method of adaptation rather than that of literal translation was resorted to by writers. ( See Extract 26. )

We now come to a prolific writer who developed the drama, which was then an entirely new branch of literature in Marathi. Looking to the times in which he lived, his success was unique and it led to further and better development of this form of literature.

#### VISNŪPANT BHĀVE.

This author comes from the State of Sangli. His name is Viṣṇu Amṛt Bhāve. His father and grand-father had served in the army of the Patwardhan Sardars. When Appāsāheb Patwardhan, the grand-father of the present Rājā of Sangli came to reside at Sangli, he brought Amṛtāv with him. Viṣṇūpant was born in 1818 in Sangli. In his boyhood he was somewhat a wayward boy. But from the first he showed a liking for fine arts. He used to make beautiful dolls of mud. He had also a fine voice and learnt singing. He did not show any literary talent then. At the request of his father, Viṣṇūpant was allowed to be an attendant of the Chiefsāheb.

#### GENESIS OF MARATHI DRAMA.

The latter once happened to see a Kannada play staged by some Kannada company of actors called the Bhāgvāt

Dramatic Company. Appāsāheb was so much pleased with the play that he made up his mind to have such plays in Marathi and he asked Viṣṇūpant who knew singing and was a versatile young man to get up such a play. Viṣṇūpant rose to the occasion and wrote a drama called 'Sitā Svayamvar' ('Sitā chooses her husband'). This drama was something like an opera as it contained both singing and dancing. But the singing was confined to the Sūtradhār who was somewhat like the chorus in the Greek drama supplying by his songs the threads of the dramatic story and the sequence of events. Viṣṇūpant secured actors with great difficulty, got their dresses ready, prepared a temporary theatre and staged his first drama before Śrīmant Appāsāheb and the people of Sangli. The drama proved a great success. The Chiefsāheb was delighted to find his suggestion so successfully carried out by his own servant. He gave him every encouragement and with his patronage and under his auspices Viṣṇūpant started the first dramatic company and began to perform his new plays before public audiences in temporary theatres, charging fees for his performances. The first play was performed in 1841. Soon the company was formed and it travelled over the whole of the Marathi-speaking country. The company added a new attraction to the amusements of the people and thereby weaned people from the vulgar and obscene Tamāsās which had become popular since the rule of Bājirāv II, and continued so, even after his fall. Thus Viṣṇūpant Bhāve turned out, unknown to himself, a social reformer and a benefactor to the Marathi-speaking public. He and his actors had to suffer persecution from the orthodox section of the community, who insulted them by asking them to leave the dinner hall. But Śrīmant Appāsāheb himself dined with Bhāve and his actors and thus removed the ban of the orthodox people on the company. Bhāve added a new form to the fast-growing Marathi literature. He wrote more than ten plays. The stories were selected from the great storehouse of myths, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārat. But the Rāmāyaṇa seems to be the more favourite source-

book of Bhāve, for the themes of many of his dramas were taken from the incidents in the eventful story of Rāma, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa. The popularity of Bhāve's dramas led to many imitators who were later superseded by men of real dramatic talent. (See extracts 27 and 28 ).

#### MISSIONARY EFFORTS.

Now we must refer to the missionary societies and missionary writers who tried to develop Marathi literature and wrote books in Marathi. The fuller history of their work belongs to subsequent periods. Here it is proper to refer to a few isolated efforts by individuals. Three persons deserve a reference in this period. The first is Rev. Dickson. With the help of Dājisāstri Śukla he wrote a book in Marathi, translating the poetical parts of the Bible. The book was published in 1839. Extract 29 will give an idea of the missionary Marathi. The other writers are Rev. Ferara and his wife. They worked as missionaries at Nasik and did a good deal of preaching and proselytising work for the Christian church. Mrs. Ferara wrote short and simple stories and published them in book form. Her husband wrote four books. The object of all the books was to make known to Marathi-knowing people the doctrines and tenets of Christianity. Of course this was done in an interesting way by means of stories dealing with the teachings of Christ and his apostles, interesting incidents taken from the Bible and, lastly, the prayers, songs and parables to be found in Christian writings. Some of these stories and songs are well done. Probably they were the work of Indian converts. But much of the missionary writing is anonymous and we know only the names of the printers and publishers. (See extracts 30 and 31.)

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## CHAPTER VII

### 1856 TO 1866: STATUS OF MARATHI IN THE UNIVERSITY.

The fourth and fifth periods between them cover only two decades. But they are divided into two small periods. The period from 1856 to 1866 begins with two important events in the history of India. These two events are poles asunder from each other and consequently have had opposite effects upon the development of modern Marathi literature. Let us briefly refer to these events.

#### THE SEPOY MUTINY

The first is known in Indian History as the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. It was partly the result of the deep discontent produced among the princely class by the policy of not recognising any heir except the direct male issue of princes, a policy advocated and acted upon by Lord Dalhousie. The evident effect of the policy was the lapse of the states to the British government. But among the Hindus there was the long-established custom of adoption in the absence of a direct male issue. The then Governor-General refused to admit the legality of this custom. As stated above, many princes lost their principalities and became, as it were, homeless. This led to great discontent among the whole class. Another source of discontent was a rumour that the British Government wanted to convert Indians to the Christian faith and the device was to make cartridges of cow's and pig's fat. This excited the native army against the British rulers. The disaffected princes took advantage of this rumour and inflamed the Indian army and incited them to mutiny. The trouble started with one company of soldiers and it spread like wild fire over a large part of Upper India. The out-break of actual mutiny was confined to a few places only. For the mutineers wanted to take possession of Delhi and Agra and for a short time

they did actually hold sway in these places. But their triumph was short-lived. The East India Company and their European soldiers showed great patience and courage and soon recovered their prestige by taking back Delhi and Agra. But though the actual struggle was confined to Upper India it created a panic all over the country and in Mahārāṣṭra in particular as Nānāsāheb Peśavā, the son of the dethroned Bājirāv II, had joined the rebellion and had become the leader of the rebels. Though the panic soon subsided its effects were fear, anxiety, distrust and uncertainty about the future in the minds of the mass of the population. This state of mind was not favourable to the growth of literature. On the contrary it had a detrimental effect upon the public mind and so people were not in a mood to write or read Marathi literature.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

It was a fortunate thing that while in India the embers of the mutiny were still smouldering, authorities in England were engaged in sanctioning a scheme for the establishment of Universities in the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, which were formed into separate Provinces under the Governor-General whose capital became Calcutta. Though the arrangements and preparations for establishing a University in Bombay began prior to the commencement of the mutiny, still the actual work of the University was begun only after the Province had become quiet and peaceful.

The sepoy Mutiny opened the eyes of the British people to the danger of leaving the rule over a vast country like India into the hands of a purely commercial body like the East India Company. So they made up their mind to hand over the administration of India to the British Parliament and to give the sovereignty to the English monarch. Of course, the day to day administration was entrusted to the men on the spot as of old. But the control, supervision and direction were taken over by the British Cabinet. For this.



purpose a new ministerial post was created under the name of the 'Secretary of State for India'.

These three great events just at the very beginning of this short period brought about great changes in Mahārāṣṭra. Especially the establishment of the Bombay University and of the two oldest colleges, the Elphinstone College in Bombay and the Deccan College in Poona, did much to popularise English literature and culture among the people. Bombay was from the first a cosmopolitan city and practically a creation of the British rule. That Bombay should become the centre of the new spirit of western culture and should quickly imbibe the new ideas and customs of the west was quite natural. Compared with Bombay, Poona was a very conservative place, being the capital of an orthodox Hindu ruler. Though it was the centre of old learning, still Elphinstone's wise policy of introducing western science and English literature through the medium of vernacular slowly converted its people to the new ideas and new ways of thinking.

#### ŚĀSTRĪS AND ENGLISH EDUCATION

In Poona there was a regular succession of Śāstrīs and Pandits learned in the ancient lore. They were now induced to learn English and to take up Government service. This policy brought about a class of Śāstrīs in whom both the Eastern and Western cultures were combined. Naturally they became interpreters of the ideas and institutions of the West to the Marathi-speaking people. They did this by writing great works in prose and poetry in Marathi. In fact, they became the makers of modern Marathi literature. So they will figure prominently in this and the subsequent periods of our history. With these general remarks, let me now proceed to give an account of their life and work.

PARAŚURĀM BALLĀL *alias* PARAŚURĀM TĀTYĀ GOBBOLE

The prince of Pandits, a learned Sanskrit scholar, a great modern poet and a critic of classical Marathi poetry—

such was Paraśurām Ballāl *alias* Paraśurām Tātyā Goḍbole. He was born at Wai, District Satara, in 1799. He came from a Konkaṇastha Brahmin family. He learnt Sanskrit at Wai at the feet of Nārāyaṇ Śāstrī Dev. His elder brother was a great student of classical Marathi Poetry. So young Paraśurām became fond of Marathi and along with his Sanskrit studies he read and learnt to enjoy Marathi poetry too. He was a born poet and began to write poems from his youth. After the fall of Bājirāv II and after Elphinstone had become the Governor of Bombay, Paraśurām Tātyā came to Poona to seek his fortune. For his great learning he was taken up in Government service and became a teacher of Sanskrit and Marathi at the Poona Pāthśālā. Knowing his wide and deep learning in both the old and the new literature Major Candy took him as his helper. Paraśurāmpant soon became his right hand man. In all the works undertaken by Major Candy for the spread of education and the development of literature among the people of Mahārāṣṭra, Paraśurām Tātyā was his colaborator.

#### TRANSLATION FROM SANSKRIT

But besides his valuable work in helping Major Candy, Paraśurām Tātyā wrote and published many books on his own account. In the first place, he translated the famous classical dramas from Sanskrit into fine lucid Marathi. This by itself was a valuable contribution to modern Marathi literature. Thus he translated in succession the Uttar Rāmcarita, the masterpiece of Bhavabhūti, the Śākuntala, the best drama of Kālidās, the Venīsaṃhāra of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇ, and the Mṛchakatik of Śūdraka. These four were, in a way, the best of the Sanskrit dramas. All these translations read like original books: such was the wonderful skill of Paraśurām Tātyā. These Marathi versions will ever remain the great ornaments of Marathi literature. After about 8 years he published the Pārvatī Parinaya Nāṭak — a second rate production in Sanskrit —, the Sanskrit text and its Marathi translation being printed together.

Another great work of his, though only a compilation, was the Navanīta (the Cream of Poetry) which popularised classical Marathi poetry among the educated men of Mahārāṣṭra.

These were the works of his mature genius. When he was old he wrote an exposition in Marathi of Moropant's Kekāvalī, a small treatise on metre, an appreciation of Kādambarī—a great novel of Bāṇabhaṭṭa—, an exposition and interpretation of the thousand names of the God Viṣṇu and lastly a history of the Marāṭhās in verse.

Paraśurāmpant died in 1874 at the ripe old age of 75. He is deservedly regarded as the greatest among the makers of modern Marathi (See extracts 32 and 33).

KṚṢṆĀJĪ HARI *alias* KṚṢṆA ŚĀSTRĪ CIPLŪṆKAR.

Another great maker of modern Marathi from the Śāstrī class was Kṛṣṇa Hari Ciplūṅkar *alias* Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī Ciplūṅkar. He is famous in Mahārāṣṭra on another account : he was the father of Viṣṇu Śāstrī, the Johnson, or as he liked to call himself, the Śivājī of Marathi literature. His life and work will be described in its proper place. But let me first come to the famous father, Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī. He was born in 1844 of a Koṅkaṇastha Brahmin family in Poona. His father sent him, at first to a guru who taught him the ancient Vedic lore. Being a precocious boy Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī finished his Vedic studies at the age of 14. Then he was sent to the Poona Pāṭha Śālā, the famous school established by Elphinstone out of the Dakṣaṇā Fund. There he learnt the Sanskrit sciences of Rhetoric, Logic and Theology under the famous guru Mor śāstrī Sāṭhe. The old method of examination was by disputation. By way of fun Mor Śāstrī became one of the disputants and Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī was made his opponent in disputation. Strange to say Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī won in the intellectual contest. Mor śāstrī was so pleased with the success of his brilliant pupil that he honoured him by putting his own shawl upon his shoulder. (To receive such a shawl

is regarded as the highest token of honour). Moreover, Mor śāstri gave him the title of Bṛhaspati (the Lord of the Intellect). Along with his Sanskrit studies, Kṛṣṇa Śāstri learnt English and acquired proficiency in that foreign language too. After finishing his education he entered Government service. He first served as the Translator to Government, then he became the Principal of the Training College, Poona. The last office of trust and honour that he held was that of the Reporter of the newspapers and magazines published in Mahārāṣṭra. After retirement he did not live long but died in Poona in 1878.

#### PROSE WORKS

Kṛṣṇa Śāstri showed equal skill in writing prose as well as poetry. Moreover, he wrote on a variety of subjects—literary and scientific. The greatest of his works is called ‘Anek Vidyā Mūla Tattve’ (Principles of many Sciences). This book gives in simple, lucid style the elements of many of the modern sciences developed in Europe. Another great work of Kṛṣṇa Śāstri was a translation of the world famous book, the ‘Arabian Nights’. He was not able to complete the translation. But he found a valuable colaborator in one Mr. Dāmle whose literary efforts will be described in their proper place. This translation is really superb. It has been the delight of the young and the old among the Marathi knowing people ever since its publication. In the year 1873 Kṛṣṇa Śāstri produced two more translations or adaptations the Rasselas of Dr. Johnson and a Life of Socrates. In the scientific line he wrote a book on the science of Political Economy. With a view to correct the short-comings of Dādobā’s Marathi grammar, Kṛṣṇa Śāstri wrote a number of articles on Marathi grammar. These articles were found to be very helpful and suggestive by subsequent Marathi grammarians.

So far we referred to Kṛṣṇa Śāstri as a prose writer. But as stated before he was both a poet and a prose writer.

In the line of poetry his greatest work is the poetic version of Kālidās's Meghadūt, a fine lyrical poem in Sanskrit. The translation is so melodious and flowing that it reads like the poem of a man of genius. He also wrote many stray verses. These are partly original and partly derived from Sanskrit sources. The last work of his was a translation of Nāgānand a second grade drama in Sanskrit and so less known to the general public.

### JOURNALISM OF KṚṢṆA ŚĀSTRĪ

So far I referred to the published writings of Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī. But as the reporter of the Press and as the Principal of the Training College he was engaged in literary activities. He had to edit and conduct a Marathi Magazine called Śālāpatrak (School Magazine), to make periodical reports upon all Marathi publications and to review in Marathi the books received for the Śālāpatrak. In this latter work his famous son Viṣṇu began to help him from his young days. With an interesting anecdote about Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī I close this account of his literary work. When the Dnyānpakāś, the first Anglo-Marathi newspaper in Poona, at first lithographed, decided to print it by types a difficulty arose on the eve of the publication of the new issue. By some mistake or neglect the types of one or two letters were not available in the press. The publishers were at a loss what to do. For they had advertised that their paper would be printed by means of types and not lithographed as before. So they came to Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī and told him about their difficulty. Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī, in a short time, composed two columns of Marathi in which these letters did not occur. What a wonderful power over the Marathi language! Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī's feat was similar to that of Moropant the great Marathi poet. But Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī's feat excels that of Moropant inasmuch as Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī had to perform it on the spur of the moment while Moropant had ample time to do it. (See extracts 34 and 35.)

### KṚṢṆA ŚĀSTRĪ RĀJVĀDE (1820-1900)

Now I may refer to Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī Rājvāde who may be said to be a rival of Parasurāmpant Goḍbole in the matter of translations of Sanskrit dramas. Between them practically all the well-known Sanskrit dramas were rendered into Marathi and they added a great and interesting literary form to the Marathi language. Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī Rājvāde was born in 1820. After completing his education he took up service in the very Pāṭha śālā where he was educated and there he became a well-known professor of Sanskrit learning. He lived to a green old age and died in 1900.

His great literary work consists of translations of Sanskrit dramas. He translated and published in quick succession the translations of Śākuntala and Vikramorvaśīya of Kālidās, the Mudrārākṣasa of Viśākhadatta and the Mṛcchakatika of Śūdraka. In these translations Rājvāde showed his command over the Marathi language. It is curious to see that two contemporary writers made Marathi translations of the Śākuntala and Mṛcchakatika. To compare the two writers as regards these translations and point out their respective merits and demerits would be an interesting study in itself. Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī's work is greater in the line of poetry than in that of prose. He wrote independent poems on the Seasons, and on ceremonies called Utsavaprakāś (Hindu ceremonies) and a work on figures of speech (See extracts 36 and 37).

### GOVIND NĀRĀYAṆ MĀDGĀVKAR (1815-1865)

Now we come to a prolific Bombay writer Govind Nārāyaṇ Mādgāvkār. He was born in 1815 of a Sārasvat family. He came to Bombay with his father when he was only 9 years old. After completing his English education he became a teacher in the Wilson High School, an educational Institution started and conducted by the Scottish Presbyterian Church and he rose to the position of the Head Master. He spent his leisure hours in giving free education

to poor students of his community a few of whom rose to a high position and held their teacher in high honour. He was a versatile writer. He wrote about 15 books on a variety of subjects. He was by nature serious and this spirit is seen in all his writings. They were all serious, gave sound advice and correct information and thus spread new ideas both among the young and the old. He died in 1865 (See extracts 38 and 39).

VIṢṆŪ BHIKĀJĪ GOKHALE *alias* VIṢṆŪBOVĀ BRAHMACĀRĪ

Now I must refer to a remarkable man of this period. He was a saint, but a militant saint with the new spirit of western culture and the fire of the religious reform of Hinduism. His name was Viṣṇū Bhikājī Gokhale. But he was popularly known as Viṣṇūbovā Brahmācārī. For he was a life-long bachelor. He was born in 1825 of a Konkanastha Brahmin family at a small village named Śiravali in Maṇagāv Taluka of the Kolaba district. From his boyhood he had a religious tendency. Though he served at Uran, Kolaba District, in the Customs Department he did not relish his servitude and was found reading books especially on religious topics. Of course he knew the English language and had read some literary works in that language. While at Uran his religious mood became predominant, so he gave up service and retired into privacy for religious enlightenment. He visited the usual places of pilgrimage. In his travels he came to see how the Christian missionaries were converting people and turning their minds from their own religion. So on his return to Mahārāṣṭra he made Bombay the scene of his activity. He began to give public lectures on the sands of the Caupāṭī of Bombay and exposed the false ideas and views held about Hinduism by Christian missionaries and pointed out the failings and shortcomings of the Christian faith itself. He proved a match to the missionary workers. He had a powerful voice and he kept people spell-bound by his fervid eloquence. His great work in Marathi is Vedokta Dharmaprakāś (Principles of Hindu

religion). In this he preached many new doctrines as the true tenets of Hinduism. For instance, he was in favour of widow-marriage. He favoured sea-voyage and he actually practised it. Similarly he was against the rigid rules of orthodox Hinduism and in the matter of eating though he was a vegetarian he took food at the hands of persons of any caste. While on a steamer, he is said to have partaken food from the sailors whether Hindu or Mohammedan. He published his public lectures on Hinduism. They are supplementary to his great work on Hinduism. He wrote a political tract in which he advocated doctrines similar to modern socialism as regards the rights of property and land. This tract he translated into English and then sent it to England. Viṣṇubovā was a remarkable saint for his age. He died in 1871 (See extracts 40 and 41).

#### DĀDOBĀ PAṆḌURAṄG TARKHADKAR

Dadobā Pāṇḍuraṅg was born in 1814 at Bombay and came of a Vaiśya family. His parent's names were Pāṇḍuraṅg and Yaśodā. These names were perpetuated by Dādobā by calling one of his literary work by the name Yaśodā-Pāṇḍuraṅgi. Pāṇḍuraṅgrāv lived at first at Tarkhad a village in Vasai Taluka, district Thana from which is derived the name of the family i.e., 'Tarkhadkar'. Pāṇḍuraṅgrāv by his industry and enterprise made himself tolerably rich and so lived well in his own house. He was remarkably regular in his habits rising early and doing all his morning duties including prayers to God. So Dādobā was taught these habits from his boyhood. At the age of 6, he began his A, B, C, in a class conducted by a private teacher. In 1822 at the age of 8, Dādobā's thread ceremony took place. After his vernacular education Dādobā began his English education in a private school but when the Elphinstone Institute was started he joined that new school. Here he was inspired by Bāpu Śāstri Śukla to do his utmost in education. Dādobā was married in 1828 at the age of 14. While Dādobā was



still learning he got an appointment of a tutor to the Prince of Jāvrā. In his autobiography (which was discovered and published long after Dādobā's death and from which all these details of his life are given), Dādobā gives a very interesting account of his journey to Jāvrā from Bombay which took a full month. He stayed at Jāvrā for about 3 years, doing his work with zeal and efficiency. Then he returned to Bombay. He was given the post of an assistant teacher in the Elphinstone Institute where he was a pupil only 3 years back. In 1840 Dādobā became the Head-master of the Surat High School then newly started. He was there for about 10 years. His fame having reached Baroda Darbar he was taken up in the service of that State. But on account of the sudden and premature death of Bāl Śāstri Jāmbhekar, he was called back to Bombay and was appointed a lecturer in the Elphinstone College. Towards the close of his service he was made an Inspector of Schools of the Northern Division of the Bombay Presidency. After completing the full period of his service he retired full of honours and spent his time in leisure. It was about this time that he must have written his autobiography which, as stated before, was published long after his death. He died at a green old age in 1882.

Dādobā's greatest contribution to modern Marathi language and literature was his famous grammar. It is curious to see that this first Marathi grammar (leaving aside Dr. Carey's book unknown in Mahārāṣṭra) was written by Dādobā while he was still a student in his school, thus showing his precocity. Being the only book on the scientific and accurate study of Marathi language Dādobā's grammar came to be recognised by the Education Department as the standard and prescribed book on the subject. For over 50 years Dādobā's book remained the standard Marathi grammar. Then a host of grammarians came forward with their new and improved books on the subject.

Dādobā wrote, later in his life, only two literary books. First of them is what he called Yaśodāpāṇḍuraṅgi named

after his parents. This is a marathi prose commentary on the Bhagwadgītā. This is a fine readable book and is worthy of the famous man. But his autobiography is really a fine and interesting piece of literature. It is capable of being compared to Aruṇodaya the autobiography of Baba Padumaji. (See Extracts No. 42 and 43.)

#### KṚṢṆA ŚĀSTRĪ BHĀṬVAḌĒKAR

Another writer from the Śāstrī class came from Bombay. His name was Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī Bhāṭvaḍekar. He was a medical man. But besides writing medical books he wrote a few books on other topics. He translated a book named Bāpdev Śatak. Then he wrote small booklets on astronomy, telegraphy and railways.

#### NĀRĀYAṆ VIṢṆU JOŚĪ

Another writer very little known in these days must be referred to here. His name is Nārāyaṇ Viṣṇu Jośī. He wrote a description of the city of Poona in 1868. It is written in a fine style. It gives very interesting information about old Poona and further gives fuller information about New Poona. The author seems to have taken a lot of trouble in collecting varied information about the city and its old and new institutions. It is a book that deserves reprinting: it is so interesting and instructive. Another book that Jośī wrote is about games and sports of Hindu girls. The language of book is simple, easy and quite intelligible. It was published in 1894. (See extracts 44 and 45.)

#### JANĀRDAN RĀMCANDRAJĪ

Janārdan Rāmcandrajī is a writer of importance though less known to later generations. He wrote a great book for those times. It is named Kavi-caritra. It contains brief lives and accounts of about 61 poets—Sanskrit, Marathi, Tamil and Telgu. The author took a great deal of trouble

in getting information about these poets, who flourished at different times, hailed from distant countries and spoke and wrote in different languages. So Rāmcandraji's compilation is a praiseworthy attempt indeed. He made a literal translation of the Sanskrit book Vedāntasār. It is a very difficult translation as it is full of technical terms. Rāmcandraji did not probably know the true function and roll of a translator. The first duty of a translator is intelligibility. Otherwise, the work is as good as non-existing to the readers for whose benefit it is written. Rāmcandraji wrote also small didactic booklets on social evils of the day. (See extracts 46 and 47.)

#### RĀMCANDRA BHIKĀJĪ GOKHALE

Rāmcandra Bhikāji Gokhale wrote an original novel named Sulocanā and Mādhav. It is of the romantic type of novels. It has an English preface, a thing very common in the early Marathi publications. In this preface the author says that the then Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Howard, did much to encourage the writing of Marathi books and especially of adaptations of Sanskrit dramas and also original works of fiction and drama. Thus, the author seems to have followed the latter part of the advice of the D. P. I. Rāmcandrapant Gokhale was a Kannada teacher in a normal school. The novel was published in 1865. Gokhale visited Kashmere at a time when travelling was so difficult and after his return he wrote an account of Kashmere and its people.

#### BHĀGVAT BROTHERS

We have now to refer to the work of two brothers, Rāmkr̥ṣṇa Harī Bhāgvat and Bhāskar Harī Bhāgvat. Both came to Bombay from a village near Rājāpur in Ratnagiri district about the year 1830 and studied English. After completing their education, they both took up service. Rāmkr̥ṣṇa got an appointment in the Bombay Municipality, while Bhāskar got himself employed in the Bombay High Court and rose to a

high position. Bhāskarpant wrote two books, the first of which was a translation of Karsandās Muḷjī's Gujarati book, 'Travels to England.' Karsandās was the first Gujarati gentleman to cross the seas and travel to England. His book was translated by Bhāgvat. This is a finely printed book with copious pictures and coloured illustrations. It is a detailed account of the travels undertaken by Karsandās Muḷjī in 1863 when ships had to travel round the Cape of Good Hope. As usual, this translation has an English preface. But the translation is very well done. The second book that Bhāskarpant wrote was a life of Rājā Rām Mohan Roy, the first great social reformer of Bengal. Rāmkrṣṇapant wrote a drama named Sāyujyasādhana and published it in 1868. It is a great and well sustained allegory. It is in seven acts and covers 358 pages. It is written on the analogy of allegorical dramas in Sanskrit. This allegory is one in which the soul and its various virtues and passions are personified. The verses occurring in the drama are simple, clear and well composed. Some of the dialogues are interesting and well sustained. Though the drama is didactic, the incidents are interesting and varied in character. Rāmkrṣṇapant wrote another book called "Kāyāji Saṁvād," a dialogue about body and soul. The author had a love of allegorical writing and proved a success in that form of literature. (See extract 50.)

#### MOROBĀ KĀNOBĀ VIJAYKAR

The next writer, Morobā Kānobā Vijaykar, comes from Bombay. He belonged to the Pāṭhāre Prabhu caste. He was born in 1813. After his education was over he found employment in the judicial department and rose to the position of a Judge of the Small Causes Court in Bombay. He was a great social reformer. Not only did he advocate widow marriage but he actually married a widow and set an example to educated widowers. He took part in the controversies on social reform and advocated social reform in general and that of widow marriage in particular. He wrote

small articles on this subject, But his great literary work is the famous novel 'Ghāśīrām Kotwāl'. It is partly historical and partly imaginative. But it gives an interesting account of the condition of Poona during Bājirāv II's reign. (See extract 51.)

Vināyak Nārāyaṇ Bhāgvat is to be remembered by his adaptation from an English story named 'Unfortunate Murāda and fortunate Sallādin.' This adaptation was revised by Kṛṣṇaśāstrī Chiplūṅkar. Naturally the book makes an interesting and readable story. It does not read like a mere translation. It was published in 1862. In 1873 Vināyakraṅ Bhāgvat published a Life of Lord Clive based on that of Macaulay. It is a readable book.

Śivarām Śāstrī Pāṇande translated Prasanna Rāghava, a drama in Sanskrit. It is a readable book.

Kṛṣṇāji Prabhākar Kaḷe wrote in a dialogue form a History of India and published the book in 1869.

It is interesting to refer to the posthumous publication of a young man, Viṣṇu Paraśurām Rānaḍe, who died while he was still a student. His book, therefore, remained unpublished for a long time. The credit of publishing it belongs to Viṣṇu Sāstrī Paṇḍit, proprietor of the Induprakāś Press in Bombay. The book gives an account of the life of George Washington. It is a very well written book of 80 pages. It shows that Marathi language was fit to express new ideas and thoughts to be found in English literature. This small book had the honour of being printed a second time in 1874. (See extract 52)

Sadāśiv Bajābā Śāstrī Amrāpurkar translated the allegorical Sanskrit drama called 'Prabodha Candrodaya'. It was published in 1851. This is a second rate production.

#### MINOR AUTHORS.

Vināyak Mahādev Śāstrī Nātū seems to be one of the early dramatists of this period. But his works are very little

known. These are named Nala Nātak and Bhiliṇī Nātak. He also wrote a big poem called Gaṇeśapratāp. He came from Baroda State. (See extract 48.)

Keśav Sakhārām Śāstri wrote only two books in Marathi: the first on the British rule in India, and the second a chronicle of England. The first was published in 1857. He is an author having neither genius nor capacity. His work merely shows how small and great people were moved by western culture to do something for their language and literature.

We now come to a writer from a noble family. His name is Dājisāheb Kibe. He visited all the places pilgrimage of in India and wrote an account of them in two volumes. (See extract 49.)

Another writer from a sardar family is Raghunāth Viṭṭhal Viñcūrkar. He was born in 1824 and died in 1889. His only work is a poetical version of the Sānti Parva of the Mahābhārat. It is a readable translation in fine and flowing verse. It was published in 1869.

His original name was Dānī and he lived at Sāsavad. He became in 1842 the administrator of his estate which yielded an annual income of Rs. 75,000. He had paid visits to famous places of pilgrimage.

Rāmji Guṇājī Caugule was a Gavalī (milkman) by caste. He took to the medical profession and rose to the position of a doctor. He was sent as a doctor to Sindh when Sindh came under British rule. After retirement from medical service Rāmji came to Bombay in 1849 and there began his practice. He gave free medicines to the poor. He died in 1860. During his life time he published the first parts of two great works, the Nārāyaṇabodh and the Stri Caritra. The first is in the form of advice given by a father to his son. It is a diadactic work full of stories which are a blend of fact and fiction. But the book is rather a dull

reading. The second part of his second book was published by his son Nārāyaṇ.

Dr. Murrey Mitchel was a well-known figure in Poona. He was a very successful preacher. He conducted evening classes in Poona. He composed Abhaṅgas in Marathi for being sung at the time of preaching. He wrote about a dozen books in Marathi. His style is better than the usual style of missionary Marathi books.

Then we have to refer to another missionary. His name was Rev. Stevenson. He published in 1852 a philosophical book in Marathi called 'A Brief outline of Philosophy.' It includes a brief account of Indian Philosophy. At the end of the book an account of Christianity is given. The language is much better than the usual missionary language (See Extract 53.)

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## CHAPTER VIII

### 1866 to 1876: THE ROMANTIC NOVEL

The fifth period of our History i. e., 1866-76 just covers a decade. Like the fourth this is also a short period. But this period excels in the quantity of its literary output all the previous periods. In it are to be found over 150 writers small and great of whom only about 80, including missionary and anonymous writers, can find place in our history, while the remaining do not deserve even a passing mention. It is a fact to be noticed that this period does not produce any great translator, poet, prose writer or historian. This is to be attributed to the dominance of the English language and literature which resulted from the introduction of English as the sole medium of instruction in the higher educational system.

But the set-back to the development of modern Marathi literature was also given by the deletion of Marathi language and literature from the University curriculum. This so-called reform in the University studies was the work of Sir Alexander Grant. He was a classical scholar from Oxford who had won honours in the Greek language. He had also translated Aristotle's famous books on Politics and Ethics. He was appointed Principal of the Elphinstone College and immediately afterwards became the Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University.

He had, before his mind's eye, the Oxford University where classical languages like Latin and Greek had a predominance in the curriculum, English Language finding no place in its studies. Sir Alexander, on this analogy, argued that in India Sanskrit and Persian ought to occupy a position similar to that of Greek and Latin in England. And so he felt that in the Bombay University Sanskrit and Persian should form the necessary second languages. He saw that, due to



the peculiar conditions of India, English was bound to have predominance over all other subjects and he had to keep that position of the English language intact. But he gave equal prominence to Sanskrit and Persian and ousted all the vernaculars of the Presidency from the University studies. For instance, Marathi language and literature was a necessary subject throughout the secondary and higher education since the beginning of western education in the Presidency. Now it was dropped out of university education.

Some far seeing Indians opposed the proposals of Sir Alexander on the ground that the educated men under his system would be altogether separated from the masses by being aliens in their own land as they would not be able to speak to the people in their language. This opposition was not heeded at the time owing to the great authority of the Vice-Chancellor. But by Sir Grant's so-called reform, Marathi lost its honoured position altogether. The result of this was that Marathi scholarship came to be looked down upon and the men brought up in the University atmosphere had a low opinion of the Marathi language. Let me now proceed to give, as usual, a detailed account of the writers of the period and their literary works.

#### KIRTANE BROTHERS

First we must notice the literary work of the Kirtane brothers which is of a very superior quality. Both of them came from a Karādā family in Kolhapur. Both of them were well educated and were influenced in a similar way by their teachers and companions. Curiously both of them served different States in Central India though they were educated in Bombay. The elder brother Vināyagrāv is the better known author and a person of real genius. He was born in 1840 at Rājūr, Taluka Junnar, district Poona. His father Janārdanpant Kirtane rose from a very humble position to that of the State Kārbhārī in Kolhapur. Vināyagrāv, and the prince of graduates, Mādhavrāv Rānāde, to be referred to in

the next period were fellow-students at Kolhapur and in Bombay. Both of them were among the first Matriculates of the Bombay University. Vināyagrāv Kīrtane was not able to secure a degree, while the more famous Rānaḍe passed all the highest examinations of the Bombay University in both Law and Arts.

Vināyagrāv first served as a teacher in a school in 1862. But from his very early age he showed an inclination to and love of Marathi literature. He became a member of the Marathi Dnyānprasārak Maṇḍalī of Bombay newly formed by enthusiastic youths for the spread of western culture and science through Marathi. This association did valuable work in its life-time though it did not live long. Before this body, young Kīrtane read two or three of his essays. They were highly praised. Even his great original historical drama on Mādhavrāv Peśvā (Mādhavrāv I) was read before this body and then it was published. Vināyagrāv then left Bombay and served in several Central India States. His abilities were observed by Sir T. Mādhavrāv—the famous statesman who was both at Indore and at Baroda. So he took Vināyagrāv with him and gave him positions of profit and honour. In Baroda he rose to the position of the Nāyab-Divān. In Indore he rose to the position of the Divān which he did not get in Baroda. After leaving the Indore service through a difference of opinion with the Mahārājā of Indore, he came to Poona but soon died in 1891.

Vināyagrāv Kīrtane, as stated above, had a precocious intellect. His genius flowered very early but in later life he gave up writing in Marathi. So his literary output is very small, some designed works being left unfinished. But whatever he wrote had the spark of originality in it. His first drama was a great success. His second drama was an equally great success. It was based on the Biblical story of Job. But the whole design of the drama was Vināyagrāv's own. He also wrote a History of Central India. This work does not come up to the expectation of what was due to